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THE BETTER FORTITUDE:

A STUDY IN MILTONIC HEROISM

by

ASHRAF H. A. RUSHDY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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(Supervisor)

Date: August 26, 1985

Dedication

TO MY GRANDMOTHER, MY MOTHER, AND MY FATHER

To Whom I Owe Everything

a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharg'd. . .

Abstract

This study is concerned with tracing some of the germinal treatments of the heroic in epic poetry through to Milton's vision of the heroic in his three major works. The first chapter will attempt to explicate a code of heroic conduct for the Iliadic world and the Odyssean world. Homer, as the father of the epic poem, is largely responsible for the concept of the epic hero. The heroes of the Iliad are, as we hope to show, magnificent physical specimens, but with a degree of consciousness of their task. The heroic code of the Iliad is one based on the medium of battle and its ultimate crux is mortality. The heroic code of the Odyssey is a move away from the medium of battle to a heroic code more in line with its hero, the wily survivor: Odysseus.

The second chapter is a study of Virgil's treatment of the hero. Virgil inherits the vision of heroism from Homer, but how he uses that vision makes all the difference. It is our argument that Virgil refines the Homeric code and infuses a measure of nationalistic civility into his new code of heroic conduct. The metaphor which persists through the Aeneid is that of the nascent country, and it is a metaphor which is fit to convey the task Virgil undertook.

The chapters on Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained are studies of Milton's renunciation of the Homeric heroic code. In the epic poem, Milton establishes his heroic code in the figure of the Son, in juxtaposition to the heroic code of destructivity and mortality which Satan represents. These two figures, then, are the heroic archetypes of

Paradise Lost. The hero of the poem is, until he lapses from that heroic code, Adam. Paradise Regained is a portrayal of the code of Miltonic heroism in its severest trial: Satan's temptation of the Son in the desert. The Son is essentially the figure of heroic conduct for Milton, and the one he suggests should be emulated in both of his epics; in the latter, Paradise Regained, he is the consummate human hero. The final chapter is a study of Milton's tragedy, Samson Agonistes, and its relation to the heroic code Milton envisaged. We suggest that the heroic code of Samson Agonistes is the same as that of Milton's other works; and that its heroic crux of utter theocentricity is a fit conclusion to the Miltonic triad of heroic poetry.

Preface

The quotations from Milton's poetical works are taken from Merritt Y. Hughes' edition of Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose (Indianapolis: Odyssey Press, 1957). The prose quotations are taken from the Frank Allen Patterson edition of The Works of John Milton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-33), save quotations from Areopagitica which are taken from the Hughes edition. Being innocent of Greek, I have relied on the translations of Professors Richmond Lattimore and Robert Fitzgerald. I have quoted from Lattimore's Iliad (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) and from Fitzgerald's Odyssey (New York: Doubleday, 1961), collating each's translation of the alternate work whenever necessary. References are made in the text following the quotations. I have used Arabic numerals to refer to the books of the Iliad and Roman numerals to refer to the books of the Odyssey. The translation of the Aeneid, used for longer quotations, is that of Professor Frank O. Copley (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill Co., 1975). For shorter quotations in the original Latin, I have used the appropriate books of the Aeneid as they are listed in the "Bibliography." Whatever other primary works are quoted are referred to in the "Footnotes."

Acknowledgements

Each of the epics discussed in the following pages has in it one dominant emotion: the Iliad anger, the Odyssey wariness, the Aeneid dolor, Paradise Lost love for, and of, God. One often wonders whether the emotion evoked by a poem is the emotion of the poet. Such conjecture is, of course, futile; but if it ever be asked what the emotion that the writer of this thesis felt, it will readily be admitted that the preponderant one is of indebtedness. The Master's thesis may be looked upon as the consummation of an undergraduate career (a consummation, to quote Hamlet, devoutly to be wished), and, as such, one cannot but look back on that career without acknowledging the many debts one has accumulated. The most profound, and the one without which this thesis would be as unsubstantial as Queen Mab ("as thin of substance as the air"), is that owed to my supervisor, Professor James F. Forrest. The debt is deeper than that owed to a supervisor, for Professor Forrest has taught, as all good teachers teach, I imagine, not only the subject of the lesson but the art of learning itself, and, ultimately, the art of pedagogy (for what better way to learn to teach but to learn from those who do teach). For all these things I thank him.

I am also indebted to Mr. Gerald M. Wandio, whom pride names as a friend, for patient proofreading of the various drafts of this thesis, without which many more infelicities of phrasing would be obvious than there are now.

This is a study of heroism in the tradition of Western literature; and, so, it is only meet that I acknowledge an admiration and love for him that has been my hero for much of my life: my brother, Amgad Rushdy.

His support through the task of this thesis is something for which I happily thank him. The final debt, the greatest of all, is owed to the three people to whom the dedication is inscribed.

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Chapter One

Homer and the Heroic Tradition

In The Works and Days Hesiod, cataloguing the generations of man, sings of the fourth generation, the generation of heroes:

> Now when the earth had gathered over this generation
> also, Zeus, son of Kronos, created yet another
> fourth generation on the fertile earth,
> and these were better and nobler,
> the wonderful generation of hero-men, who are also
> called half-gods, the generation before our own
> on this vast earth. [1]

The fate of these heroes is two-fold. Some perish in the wars which mark this generation; some survive and prosper in domestic bliss.

> But of these too, evil war and the terrible carnage
> took some; some by seven-gated Thebes
> in the land of Kadmos
> as they fought together over the flocks of Oidiopous;
> others
> war had taken in ships over the great gulf
> of the sea,
> where they also fought for the sake
> of lovely-haired Helen.
> There, for these, the end of death was misted
> about them.
> But on others Zeus, son of Kronos, settled a living
> and a country
> of their own, apart from human kind,
> at the end of the world.
> And there they have their dwelling place,
> and hearts free of sorrow
> in the islands of the blessed
> by the deep-swirling stream of the ocean,
> prospering heroes, on whom in every year
> three times over
> the fruitful grainland bestows its sweet yield. [WD, 162-72]

The heroes who die in the wars, notably the Trojan War, the war for "lovely-haired Helen," are the the heroes of the Iliad. The Iliad is a poem of war, a poem of heroism in battle. The heroes who live beyond

the war are the subject of the Odyssey, a poem concerned with domesticity.

The two Homeric epics, then, may be said to cover the range of the generation of heroes, both the heroes who die gloriously in the throes of battle and those heroes who live beyond the battlefield. An examination of the two poems reveals two distinct heroic codes, each fit for the setting of its poem.

I.

> There the screaming and the shouts of triumph rose up together
> of men killing and men killed, and the ground ran blood.(Iliad 8.64-65)

The Iliad begins with an invocation which calls to attention numerous aspects of heroism. The poet begins,

> Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus
> and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaians,
> hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls
> of heroes, but gave their bodies to be the delicate feasting
> of dogs, of all birds, and the will of Zeus was accomplished
> since that time when first there stood in division of conflict
> Atreus' son the lord of men and brilliant Achilleus. (1.1-7)[2]

The themes invoked include anger, mortality, the treatment of the soul and body after death, and fate — "the will of Zeus." An examination of the poem will reveal the proper heroic conduct of the warrior in relation to these themes. Other situations with which the hero has to deal will also be examined: the mental ones of fear and consciousness. From such an investigation of the heroic conduct in each of these situations we may infer a heroic code for what may be referred to as the "world of the Iliad." The heroic code, of course, must be judged in

accordance with the behavior of the heroes. A survey of the heroes of the Iliad, then, will follow the explication of the heroic code.

The subject of the epic is the anger of Achilles. Anger is an emotion which dominates the Iliad from the invocation to the penultimate book. Achilles is angered by Agamemnon when Atreus' son takes Briseis away from him. His honour is intruded upon, and he reacts with heroic anger.

> And the anger came on Peleus' son, and within his shaggy breast the heart was divided two ways, pondering whether to draw from beside his thigh the sharp sword, driving away all those who stood between and kill the son of Atreus, or else to check the spleen within and keep down his anger. (1.188–92)

Athena flies down and stops Achilles' hand, as he "was drawing from its scabbard the great sword"(1.194). The decision Achilles had made before the divine intervention was to kill Agamemnon. Achilles' natural response, his heroic instincts, led him to vent his anger in battle. Achilles' anger is also the instigation for his return to the battlefield. After Hector kills Patroklos, Achilles yells out in anguish and anger. Achilles is, at that point, symbolized by fire, the fire of anger: "unwearied dangerous fire . . . played above the head of great-hearted Peleion blazing"(18.225). His anger causes him to refuse any mediation or any compromise. He cannot promise that he will not defile Hector's body after the battle; his anger cannot be appeased by anything less than savagery. Achilles' anger will not be diluted by the immolation of twelve Trojan soldiers, an act which the epic poet describes with distaste.[3] The destructive anger of Achilles will come to an end only when he meets Priam in the final book. His anger has now exceeded heroic lengths and begun to reveal an animalistic brutality

which is unacceptable in a hero. Anger, though, is of the moment in heroic conduct. Patroclus equates anger with courage in his address to Achilles in the sixteenth book (16.30-31). It is the emotion which underlies revenge, and revenge is the basis of the Trojan War.

The logical step from anger and revenge — an offspring of anger — to war, if such may be called logical, leads our inquiry onto the battlefield. It is on the battlefield that the hero finds his self; the battlefield is the locus of heroism: "the Homeric hero loved battle, and fighting was his life."[4] War in itself, though, does not promote heroism. Rather, war offers the opportunity for two situations which do promote heroism. The two situations are fear, the emotion of the battling warrior, and mortality, which is the reason for his fear and, ultimately, the consummation of battle.

In the pitch of battle for life and death, fear is the predominant emotion. Fear, as distinct from cowardice, is an acceptable emotion for a hero. Aeneas feels fear in battle; even Achilles, at the very height of his anger, still feels fear(20.262, 20.279, 20.282). As the poet sings, "Fear would have gripped even a man stout-hearted"(4.421). Feeling fear indicates a degree of consciousness which is a necessary aspect of heroism. The concept of consciousness in the hero will be dealt with later. Fear is felt by the warrior-hero because of the imminent presence of death. And it is mortality which is the foundation of heroism.

Mortality is the index of heroism. The gods, by virtue of their immortality, cannot be heroes. The finest expression of the necessity of mortality to heroism is the famous example of Achilles' twin-fates.

Achilles replies to Odysseus after Odysseus has catalogued the gifts which Agamemnon is offering for Achilles' return to battle:

> Of possessions
> cattle and fat sheep are things to be had for the lifting,
> and tripods can be won, and the tawny high heads of horses,
> but a man's life cannot come back again, it cannot be lifted
> nor captured again by force, once it has crossed the teeth's barrier.
> For my mother Thetis the goddess of the silver feet tells me
> I carry two sorts of destiny toward the day of my death. Either
> if I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans,
> my return home is gone, but my glory shall be everlasting;
> but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers,
> the excellence of my glory is gone, but there will be a long life
> left for me, and my end in death will not come to me quickly.(9.405-16)

The equation of mortality and heroic fame is unequivocal. It is an archetypal choice: death and fame or life and anonymity. Mortality and honour are linked in a unique interaction. Death does not necessarily lead to heroic fame, but such fame cannot be achieved without death. The poet, in another instance, sings of Zeus' treatment of Hector:

> Out of the bright sky Zeus himself was working to help him
> and among men so numerous he honoured this one man
> and glorified him, since Hektor was to have only a short life
> and already the day of his death was being driven upon him
> by Pallas Athene through the strength of Achilleus.(15.610-14)

The imminence of mortality creates the ethos of heroic conduct. The hero must face his mortality and come to terms with it.

Homer does not offer any sort of post-mortal existence to heroes, nor does the hero anticipate any such after-life. The scenes which describe death are glorious, and final. As the invocation makes clear, the souls of heroes are "hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades," while their bodies are picked at by birds and dogs. Death is not a transition as in the Christian order but it is a final consummation. It is, though, a consummation devoutly to be wished.

There is a sense of beauty in mortality. Priam describes the aesthetics of mortality in the dead figure of a young warrior:

> For a young man all is decorous
> when he is cut down in battle and torn with the sharp bronze, and lies there
> dead, and though dead still all that shows about him is beautiful;(22.71-73)

Mortality, moreover, is the factor of compulsion in the pursuit of honour.

Because the gods do not face any finite limitation to their lives, the battle of the gods in the twenty-first book is quite without any true significance, in contradistinction with the battle of men. When his son Sarpedon is killed, Zeus weeps tears of blood (16.459). While he views the battles of his fellow deities, however, his reaction is less pathetic. The trumpet sounds signalling the entrance of the gods into the battle:

> Zeus heard it
> from where he sat on Olympos, and was amused in his deep heart
> for pleasure, as he watched the gods' collision in conflict.(21.388-90)

Zeus' hilarity is well-founded; there is no serious outcome of battling immortals.[5]

Mortality, then, is a requisite for heroism. Glory is linked to blood. The image of the sanguinary hero is best seen in the description of Achilles:

> . . . Achilleus
> swept everywhere with his spear like something more than a mortal
> harrying them as they died, and the black earth ran blood. . .

> so before great-hearted Achilleus the single-foot horses
> trampled alike dead man and shields, and the axle under

> the chariot was all splashed with blood and the rails which encircled
> the chariot, struck by flying drops from the feet of the horses,
> from the running rims of the wheels. The son of Peleus was straining
> to win glory, his invincible hands spattered with bloody filth.(20.492-94, 498-503)

The gods, it should be noted, do not have blood. Ichor flows in their immortal veins. When Diomedes stabs Aphrodite,

> blood immortal flowed from the goddess,
> ichor, that which runs in the veins of the blessed divinities(5.339-40)

Aphrodite leaves the battlefield and returns to Olympos to the arms of her mother, Dione. Dione cures her daughter thus:

> . . .with both hands [she] stroked away from her arm the ichor,
> so that the arm was made whole again and the strong pains rested.(5.416-17)

In the case of mortal warriors, blood and death are intimately interwoven. So it is that rarely will a hero be injured; in most cases he is killed swiftly. Three of the major heroes, Diomedes, Odyseus, and Agamemnon, do suffer injuries, but this is an exception. There are approximately three hundred and eighteen people killed in the Iliad (two hundred and forty-three who are named), and the number who are injured are limited to less than a handful.[6]

Mortality, then, is a requisite for heroism. It is the knowledge of man's finite existence that drives him to glorious action. Achilles, for example, who chooses a fate of short-lived glory, recognizes the necessity of action. He says to his mother,

> Now I shall go, to overtake that killer of a dear life,
> Hektor; then I will accept my own death, at whatever
> time Zeus wishes to bring it about, and the other immortals.

> For not even the strength of Herakles fled away from destruction,
> although he was dearest of all to lord Zeus, son of Kronos,
> but his fate beat him under, and the wearisome anger of Hera.
> So I likewise, if such is the fate which has been wrought for me,
> shall lie still, when I am dead. Now I must win excellent glory. .
> .(18.114-21)

The fate of mortality — the inevitable destiny of every man — makes necessitous immediate action.

The finest statement of the heroic code which demands mortality for the achievement of heroism is given by "godlike Sarpedon," Zeus' son. As he approaches the battle, he addresses Glaukos, son of Hippolochos:

> Man, supposing you and I, escaping this battle,
> would be able to live on forever, ageless, immortal,
> so neither would I myself go on fighting in the foremost
> nor would I urge you into the fighting where men win glory.
> But now, seeing that the spirits of death stand close about us
> in their thousands, no man can turn aside nor escape them,
> let us go on and win glory for ourselves, or yield it to
> others.(12.322-28)

It is because of man's mortality that he attempts to attain heroism. And, in the final summation, mortality is the only means available to man to attain heroism. Menander's dictum is especially fit for this heroic code: "Whom the gods love dies young."

Sarpedon ends his speech to Glaukos with the suggestion that either they will "win glory for [themselves], or yield it to others." The heroic code rests on the premise of mortality; that is the reason why battle is the proper medium for heroism. The ultimate consummation of war is to kill or to be killed. Dying, that is dying properly, is part of the hero's life. The proper death for a hero is in battle. Achilles, when he is drowning in the river Xanthos, laments the shameful death with which he is confronted; he says,

> I wish now Hektor had killed me, the greatest man grown in this
> place.

> A brave man would have been the slayer, as the slain was a brave man.
> But now this is a dismal death I am doomed to be caught in,
> trapped in a big river as if I were a boy and a swineherd
> swept away by a torrent when he tries to cross in a rainstorm.(21.279–83)

A hero dies at the hands of other heroes; a death any other way is a "dismal death." Death, moreover, should be achieved with a heroic fortitude. Hector shows this type of conduct when he finally realizes that he is about to die at Achilles' hands. He consoles himself thus:

> . . .now my death is upon me.
> Let me at least not die without a struggle, inglorious,
> but do some big thing first, that men to come shall know of it.(22.303–05)

Hector dies heroically. There are cases, though, of men who die in retreat. This death is ignoble; they have succumbed to cowardice, and are beaten by the battle. The death of one who attacks the oncoming force is the death of one who defeats the battle even in his death. Idomeneus articulates this point of view in his address to Meriones:

> Even were you to be wounded in your work with spearcast or spearstroke,
> the weapon would not strike behind your neck, nor in your back,
> but would be driven straight against the chest or the belly
> as you made your way onward through the meeting of champions.(13.288–91)

The anatomical point of contact with the weapon of death is strongly linked with heroic conduct. Mortality is a necessity for heroism, but the means of mortality is the final statement of a heroic life.[7]

Although, as was noted earlier, there is no sense of after-life for the slain hero, a fact which adds poignancy to the heroic life, there is the important matter of the hero's burial. The invocation mentions that dogs and birds would ravage the bodies of the warriors. This is one of the fears of the hero, that his body would not receive its proper

treatment after his death. Hector shows this concern when he requests that Achilles return his body to the Trojans. The concern is important enough that Hector requests it twice: once before the final battle, and, once again, in his dying words.

> In his weakness Hektor of the shining helm spoke to him:
> 'I entreat you, by your life, by your knees, by your parents,
> do not let the dogs feed on me by the ships of the Achaians,
> but take yourself the bronze and gold that are there in abundance,
> those gifts that my father and the lady my mother will give you,
> and give my body to be taken home again, so that the Trojans
> and the wives of the Trojans may give me in death my rite of burning.' (22.336-43)

It is a request which Achilles denies the dying Hector. It is a request which will only be granted after Achilles has spent his almost indomitable anger, and it is only granted to Priam, and only then with the intervention of the gods.

Burial is an important aspect of heroism. Sarpedon is killed in the field before Ilium, but Zeus, his father, orders Apollo to

> . . .rescue Sarpedon
> from under the weapons, wash the dark suffusion of blood from him,
> then carry him far away and wash him in a running river,
> anoint him in ambrosia, put ambrosial clothing upon him;
> then give him into the charge of swift messengers to carry him,
> of Sleep and Death, who are twin brothers, and these two shall lay him
> down presently within the rich countryside of broad Lykia
> where his brothers and countrymen shall give him due burial
> with tomb and gravestone. Such is the privilege of those who have perished.(16.667-75)

The battle between the Trojans and the Achaians reaches its highest pitch when it is fought over the body of the slain Patroclus (Book 17), whose burial and the tournament games after it comprise the twenty-third book. Of burial, the "privilege" of heroes, Professor Vermeule writes:

> The gods order burial, to complete the lives and the honor of efforts and love which might seem wasted, but which would have

> been struck by innate mortality anyway, and to gain for the dead a measure of immortality in mourning and ceremony.[8]

The hero's immortality is gained only in burial and the songs he inspires (a point which will be dealt with later). This should not denigrate burial. It is, as Vermeule notes astutely, one of the principal lessons of the Iliad: "training for heroes to drop the carnivore mask and express courtesy to mortality." Such is Achilles' final lesson.

Achilles learns the lesson of respect for the body of the dead in unique terms. The burial of Patroclus is a prelude to his own burial; it is, indeed, Achilles burying himself symbolically. Achilles, the poet tells us, "had chosen [a] place for a huge grave mound, for himself and Patroklos"(23.126). He does this in accordance with Patroclus' wish that they be buried together (23.81-83). The gesture, though, symbolizes Achilles' recognition of his own fated death shortly to come. Thus, we have traced the journey of heroism from its emotive genesis, anger, to its logical medium, battle, to the two factors of battle which offer themselves to heroic conduct, fear and mortality. Apropos mortality, we have seen that it is an essential constituent of heroism. The means of dying, and the treatment of the body after death complete the journey. And, in conclusion, we see Achilles preparing for his own death, symbolically, through the burial of Patroclus.

This conclusion leads to a new level of inquiry: the psychological basis of heroism. Professor Bruno Snell states that the Homeric conception of man does not include any psychological profundity. He argues that there are "no divided feelings in Homer." The only division (there is, he argues, no sense of "tension" either) is between the mind and its thymos, which is the organ of emotion. Thus, Professor Snell

concludes, "there is in Homer no genuine reflexion, no dialogue of the soul with itself."[9] This proclamation seems to hinder any discussion of the psychological foundation of Homeric heroism. There does seem to be, however, a reasonable fund of psychological depth in the Iliad to call Professor Snell's statement into question. The three basic psychological themes by which heroism is affected are consciousness, choice, and anagnorisis. As has been suggested, Achilles approaches Patroclus' burial with a full recognition of his own. This anagnorisis, accompanied by an almost divine prescience, is achieved by three heroes throughout the poem.

As Patroclus dies he attains an almost divine perspective; the world seems clear to him as he can see, like Hamlet's God "looking before and after," the cosmic setting.[10] Patroclus enunciates the history of his death and presages that of Hector. Although Patroclus saw neither Apollo hit him — "nor did Patroclus see him as he moved through the battle"(16.789) — nor Euphorbos stab him — "from close behind his back a Dardanian man hit him between the shoulders . . .[and] ran away again. . ."(16.806-13) — he, in a final pre-mortal vision, is able to describe these events. He also prophesies Hector's death. He addresses Hector thus:

> Now is your time for big words, Hektor. Yours is the victory
> given by Kronos' son, Zeus, and Apollo, who have subdued me
> easily, since they themselves stripped the arms from my shoulders.
>
> No, deadly destiny, with the son of Leto, has killed me,
> and of men it was Euphorbos; you are only my third slayer.
> And put away in your heart this other thing that I tell you.
> You yourself are not one who shall live long, but now already
> death and powerful destiny are standing beside you,
> to go down under the hands of Aiakos' great son, Achilleus.
> He spoke, and as he spoke the end of death closed in upon him,

> and the soul fluttering free of his limbs went down into Death's house
> mourning her destiny, leaving youth and manhood behind her.
> (16.844-57)

Nor is Patroclus the lone recipient of pre-mortal anagnorisis. Hector achieves the same cosmic vision as his soul flees his body.

Hector has just been stabbed and, as Achilles stands over him, he prophesies Achilles' fated death. He says to Achilles:

> Be careful now; for I might be made into the gods' curse
> upon you, on that day when Paris and Phoibos Apollo
> destroy you in the Skaian gates, for all your valour.
> He spoke, and as he spoke the end of death closed in upon him,
> and the soul fluttering free of his limbs went down into Death's house
> mourning her destiny, leaving youth and manhood behind her.
> (22.358-63)

As each of these heroes dies and his soul floats out of his body it is as if he is invested with a sacred presbyopic sight. The world seems ordered at that brief shining moment, and the dying hero can see and articulate the order. Achilles, who does not die in the Iliad, shows his anagnorisis in a way unique to him. This aspect of Achilles will be dealt with later.

Only Patroclus and Hector are granted that final cosmic perspective as they breathe their last. It is, so to speak, a refined consciousness which they attain, and one which is attributed to two of the greatest heroes of the poem: Hector and Patroclus. For the other heroes of the Iliad, their heroism is measured by the mortal consciousness they demonstrate. The hero must show a degree of consciousness regarding his actions or he becomes merely a bellicose automaton. Consciousness is shown by fear; the warrior acknowledges the emotion. He does not leap into the battle without knowing the costs; it is the knowledge of the

costs, and the desire to enter the battle still, that makes for heroic conduct. Achilles' case is the obvious one. There are examples of lesser moment throughout the poem. Euchenor knows the outcome of his entrance into the battle, and yet he enters (13.663-70). The same heroic consciousness is displayed by the heroes who discover themselves in a perilous situation. Each begins a dialogue with his soul and debates the eternal heroic conflict with himself: whether to stand and fight or to turn and flee. This primitive psychomachia is the sign of psychological consciousness which gives Homeric heroes their position as the progenitors of later Western literary heroes of which Milton's Adam, Son, and Samson are all descendants.[11]

Diomedes is a hero who is concerned with his appearance; nor should this concern be any sort of denigration of his heroism. The hero in the Iliad is concerned with reputation, with how he appears to other heroes. In this world, in which fleshly might is glorified, in which the physical is all, appearance takes on great importance. Diomedes, for example, responds to Nestor's invitation to retreat with a lament for the resultant infamy:

> Yes, old sir, all this you have said is fair and orderly.
> But this thought comes as a bitter sorrow to my heart and my spirits;
> for some day Hektor will say openly before the Trojans:
> 'The son of Tydeus, running before me, fled to his vessel.'
> So he will vaunt; and then let the wide earth open beneath me.
> (8.146-50)

Diomedes then shows a consciousness of fear when he "pondered doubtfully" (8.167) whether to fight Hector or to return to the ships. The psychomachy is inspired by the desire for appearance. Another

example of Diomedes' concern for appearance is in his reply to Sthenlos when the latter urges retreat:

> Argue me not toward flight, since I have no thought of obeying you. No, for it would be ignoble for me to shrink back in the fighting or to lurk aside, since my fighting strength stays steady forever. I shrink indeed from mounting behind the horses, but as I am now, I will face these. Pallas Athene will not let me run from them.(5.251-56)

Diomedes shows a consciousness of his power. In the fifth book Diomedes is invested with supreme strength. He even dares to fight gods in this ecstasy of fortitude. The end of his speech offers an interesting perspective of heroism. Diomedes claims that Athena "will not let" him run from the oncoming attackers.[12] There is a sense of divine compulsion in the statement which smacks of the hero's understanding the divine order. It is during the fifth book, moreover, that Athene blesses Diomedes with supernatural sight. She descends from Olympos and says to Diomedes,

> . . I have taken away the mist from your eyes, that before now was there, so that you may well recognize the god and the mortal. (5.127-28)

Diomedes does see the gods, and he stabs Aphrodite and attacks Apollo. For a short glorious while he was under the tutelage of Athena, and his will was truly subjected to hers. It is, after all, Athena who bids him stab Aphrodite (5.131-32).

It is in Diomedes, also, that we find the heroic code apropos the taking of plunder exemplified. Diomedes, as we have noted, lives a life of appearances because of the physical foundation of heroism. One more physical foundation is the concern for plunder. Heroism consists in the accumulation of physical emblems of glory. This facet of heroism leads

to the most pitched battles, when the Trojans and the Achaians fight over the body of a soldier for the armour on his dead body. Such is the fight described in the seventeenth book over Patroclus on whose body is the armour of Achilles. Diomedes shows this aspect of the heroic code when he addresses Sthenelos regarding Aeneas' horses. He tells Sthenelos to capture the horses after he kills their owner and Pandaros. He recites some eight verses concerning the horses' history and how they came to Aeneas. He then concludes with the equation of plunder and glory: "If we might only take these we should win ourselves excellent glory"(5.273).

The aspect of heroism that places such importance on the value of pillage may be best seen in light of the opening scene of the poem. Achilles is upset because Agamemnon takes Briseis, who, fittingly enough, is referred to as Achilles' "prize"(1.185). It is glorious to win such substance, and ignoble to have it taken from you. One's physical possessions are, like one's mortality, the prize of heroic battle. So, in the most poignant scene of the poem in which Achilles chases Hector about the walls of Troy, the idea of plunder and mortality are linked in one captivating image. The poet sings,

> It was a great man who fled, but far better he who pursued him rapidly, since here was no festal beast, no ox-hide
> they strove for, for these are prizes that are given men for their running.
> No, they ran for the life of Hector, breaker of horses.(22.158-61)

Hector's life is the ultimate "prize," the final plunder, for Achilles. Achilles has two prizes which are both, significantly, human beings: Briseis and Hector. In a fit conclusion to the poem, Achilles gives

Priam the body of Hector and sleeps that night with his original plunder, the one rightfully his:

> . . .Achilleus slept in the inward corner of the strong-built shelter,
> and at his side lay Briseis of the fair colouring.(24.675-76)

In terms of plunder, the poem has achieved its poetically just conclusion.

Odysseus' portrayal as a hero in the Iliad is one of a man infinitely resourceful. It is the epithet most often attributed to Laertes' son: "resourceful Odysseus." It is wrong to assume that because of his resourcefulness Odysseus' heroism is somehow tainted. Odysseus enjoys battle as much as any other Achaian. When Agamemnon tests the courage of the Achaians by suggesting they retreat from Troy, and the soldiers fly towards their ships to prepare for the voyage homeward, Odysseus' response is heroic: "he had laid no hand upon his black, strong-benched vessel, since disappointment touched his heart and his spirit"(2.170-71). There is basis for an argument that Odysseus does not act heroically in one episode in the eighth book. As the fight has shifted visibly to the Trojans Odysseus retreats, as do the rest of the Achaians. Diomedes cries out to Odysseus to come to his and Nestor's aid.

> He spoke, but long-suffering great Odysseus gave no attention
> as he swept by on his way to the hollow ships of the Achaians.(8.97-98)

It must be noted that this incident is ambiguous at best, as the verb for "gave no attention" is the same as "not to hear."[13] Odysseus, in the pitch and bustle of battle, simply may not have heard Diomedes call him. Diomedes himself retreats presently. Furthermore, Odysseus' actions in

the sequent books reveal an exemplary heroic attitude. Finally, Diomedes, when he is given the choice of who he wishes to go with him on the ambush and espionage mission into the Trojan camp, chooses Odysseus of whom he says, his "heart and [his] proud spirit are beyond all others forward in all hard endeavours" (10.242–47).

Odysseus, as we might expect from one blessed with his mental capabilities, shows a supreme consciousness of his actions, a consciousness beyond all the other heroes. He finds himself trapped, alone, surrounded by Trojans. His mind addresses itself:

> And troubled, he spoke then to his own great-hearted spirit:
> 'Ah me, what will become of me? It will be a great evil
> if I run, fearing their multitude, yet deadlier if I am caught
> alone; and Kronos' son drove to flight the rest of the Danaans.
> Yet still, why does the heart within me debate on these things?
> Since I know that it is cowards who walk out of the fighting,
> but if one is to win honour in battle, he must by all means
> stand his ground strongly, whether he be struck or strike down
> another.'(11.403–10)

Odysseus is then surrounded by Trojans, of whom he kills seven. In contrast with Odysseus' heroic action, the seventh man killed, Sokos, is killed while he retreats. Odysseus is finally rescued and "led from the battle" by Menelaus and Ajax. It is significant that Odysseus does not leave the battle, but is "led" from it; his is a heroism of the best sort. He reaches a degree of consciousness which no other hero undergoes. He overcomes the most alarming of questions — the question of the meaning of heroism — in a most uncomfortable situation — while caught in the most perilous position of battle, surrounded and alone; and still he manages to overcome this difficult question and react heroically. Odysseus' heroism is the greater because his consciousness of his situation is greater.

Odysseus reveals his consciousness of the basis of the heroic code — the aspect of mortality — in an angry reply to Agamemnon. Atreus' son offers an unheroic alternative; he says,

> There is no shame in running, even by night, from disaster.
> The man does better who runs from disaster than he who is caught by it.(14.80–81)

Odysseus looks darkly at Agamemnon and replies thus:

> Son of Atreus, what sort of word escaped your teeth's barrier?
> Ruinous! I wish you directed some other unworthy
> army, and were not lord over us, over us to whom Zeus
> has appointed the accomplishment of wars, from our youth
> even into our old age until we are dead, each of us.(14.82–87)

Odysseus is as anxious for the glory of battle as the best of the Achaians. His consciousness of his actions makes his heroism more pronouncedly meritorious. The more deeply one sees into things, the more heroic is one's ability to act. It is, though, Odysseus' capacity for common sense which is his individuating mark. A good approach to Odysseus' character is to compare it with Achilles'.

Achilles is the passionate hero who has chosen his fate with passion, and lives his life with passion. Odysseus is calm and collected. He believes in fate, but he never seems torpid in the face of overwhelming destiny. He is, in that aspect, a very human character. He is aware of his own capabilities, and yet he has infinite hope for altering his situation beyond those capabilities. Consider, for example, the scene in which Achilles decides to return to the war. He is anxious to resume fighting, to avenge Patroclus' death. Odysseus understands the ways of men and war; he counsels the soldiers to eat before they resume battle. An army, after all, travels on its stomach, as the saying goes. Achilles does not approach the situation

rationally. He sees with the eyes of vengeance, the myopic vision which blurs all but the one desired aim — in this case, the death of Hector — creating a monomaniacal warrior. Achilles rejects food, in a passionate speech:

> . . .for me at least, neither drink nor food shall go down my very throat, since my companion has perished and lies inside my shelter torn about with the cutting bronze, and turned against the forecourt while my companions mourn about him. Food and drink mean nothing to my heart but blood does, and slaughter, and the groaning of men in the hard work.(19.209–14)

Odysseus, whose love of battle is not less than Achilles', is, in the final analysis, "resourceful." In summation, though, it cannot be said that this resourcefulness detracts from Odysseus' achievements as a hero. Odysseus is not inferior to Achilles in heroism; he is different. Achilles, after proclaiming his intention to fast until Patroclus is avenged, is fed by the gods. Zeus orders Athena to go "to him, and distil nectar inside his chest, and delicate ambrosia, so the weakness of hunger will not come upon him."(19.347–48) Achilles is fed by the gods and he is fed the food of the gods. There is no doubt that Achilles leads the life of one chosen; he has, in the original sense of the word, grace. Odysseus, although Athena acts as his personal tutelary spirit, does not stand in the same rank as Achilles. Achilles is almost a mortal god. Odysseus must act as a man, because he is limited to being a man.

Hector is the greatest hero of the Trojans. In his conduct he exemplifies the Trojan outlook towards the war. The Achaians are motivated by revenge; their attack is fueled by anger. The Trojans, on the other hand, are defending their citadel, motivated by the emotion of

fear. The Achaians outnumber them by a ratio of ten to one (2.127). The Achaians are the ones who have assailed Ilium; the Achaian ships are not in danger until the gods intervene in the ninth year of the war. The Achaians are far from home; the battlefield is not their own land. From the Trojan perspective, the battlefield is their land; their home is being attacked. Hector, then, is an emblem of the defendant. He shows a concern for the society which he desperately wishes to maintain in the face of annihilation. Hector is truly the quintessential Trojan; he is, ultimately, Priam's, the patriarch's, son: Ilium is destined to be his patrimony.

Hector fits the role he is given to perfection. He shows a concern for the societal in his heroic conduct. When he rouses the men to action, he uses not the psychology of combative heroism; his is not only a call to glory. He uses the rhetoric of social responsibility. Consider this battle speech:

> . . .He who among you
> finds by spear thrown or spear thrust his death and destiny,
> let him die. He has no dishonour when he dies defending
> his country, for then his wife shall be saved and his children
> afterwards,
> and his house and property shall not be damaged, if the Achaians
> must go away with their ships to the beloved land of their
> fathers.(15.494-99)

The tone is that of a patriarch: protect the children, the wives, the house and home, the country; drive the enemy back to their own homeland — "the beloved land of their fathers." In juxtaposition with the Achaian desire to extirpate Troy and and its populace, Hector's plea is defensive, and domestic. Hector, of course, does recognize the glory of battle; he comprehends the heroic code of mortality and warfare. His primary appeal, though, is not as a warrior although he is the greatest

of the Trojan warriors. He is, however, constantly compared unfavorably to Achilles. Rather, Hector represents the desperation of the husband and parent in the face of danger to the wife and child. The most touching scene of the poem contains Hector and Andromache and Astyanax in their final domestic communion. The scene offers the only expression of familial bliss in the poem and its stark contrast with the war outside the walls of Ilium gives that battle an added poignancy. Hector's character is also profitably seen in contrast with Achilles'.

Achilles has an interesting relationship with Andromache. He has killed her father, her seven brothers, and played a role in the death of her mother. After Andromache recounts this sorrowful tale to her husband, she concludes pathetically:

> Hektor, thus you are father to me, and my honored mother,
> you are my brother, and you it is who are my young husband.(6.429–30)

Hector answers his wife with compassion, but the compassion of a man who knows he has a destiny which conflicts with his domesticity — a destiny of heroism. He says to her,

> . . .All these
> things are in my mind also, lady; yet I would feel deep shame
> before the Trojans, and the Trojan women with trailing garments,
> if like a coward I were to shrink aside from the fighting;
> and the spirit will not let me, since I have learned to be valiant
> and to fight always among the foremost ranks of the Trojans,
> winning for my own self great glory, and for my father.(6.440–46)

The same sense of compulsion dominates over Hector as had dominated over Diomedes: "the spirit will not let me." Following this heroic speech, Hector gives a seventeen-verse prophecy of the fall of Troy (6.447–63). He concludes that prophecy by voicing his wish not to see the most lamentable outcome of that fall — Andromache's slavery:

> But may I be dead and the piled earth hide me under before I hear you crying and know by this that they drag you captive.(6.464–65)

The scene ends with Hector playing with his son, who, significantly, shows fear for his father's aspect in battle gear. Hector returns to the battle. The next time his wife sees him, he, like her father and mother and brothers, has been killed by Achilles.

Hector, as the hero with a social concern, stands as the most fit representative of Troy. He shows a primal concern for defending the city and family. But war, as we have seen, offers the opportunity for glory; it is the medium of heroism even from the defensive standpoint. Hector's fall, which is a prelude to Troy's, occurs because he exceeds his defensive position. Hector's <u>hubris</u> is, in effect, an excess of heroic pride. Hector shows this excess when he defies Polydamas' suggestion that the Trojans retreat once they have driven the Achaians back to their ships because Achilles is stirring in battle once again. Hector responds to that suggestion with this challenge:

> If it is true that brilliant Achilleus is risen beside their ships, then the worse for him if he tries it, since I for my part will not run from him out of the sorrowful battle, but rather stand fast, to see if he wins the great glory, or if I can win it. The war god is impartial. Before now he has killed the killer.(18.305–09)

The epic voice then comments on the preceding scene, asserting that Polydamas had spoken the proper counsel.

> So spoke Hector, and the Trojans thundered to hear him; fools, since Pallas Athene had taken away the wits from them. They gave their applause to Hektor in his counsel of evil, but none to Poulydamas, who had spoken good sense before them.(18.310–13)

The ominous voice of the poet alerts us to Hector's mistake; he has overstepped his boundary. Defense was his prerogative; offensive action is his hubris.

Hector's actions, when they exceed a defensive position, are judged to be actions revealing an overweening pride. After Hector kills Patroclus, he strips Achilles' armour from his body and dons it himself. This action is commented on by Zeus:

> . . .Ah, poor wretch!
> There is no thought of death in your mind now, and yet death stands close beside you as you put on the immortal armour
> of a surpassing man. There are others who tremble before him.
> Now you have killed this man's dear friend, who was strong and gentle,
> and taken the armour, as you should not have done, from his shoulders
> and head. (17.200-06, my italics)

Zeus suggests that Hector has exceeded his assigned station. The fact that Achilles is a superior warrior is unequivocally stated: he is a "surpassing man" compared with Hector. The question of free-will in the case of Hector — the question of how much any hero in the Iliad is "free" in light of constant divine intervention — is not our concern here. His actions receive notice from the poet and from Zeus, and both suggest that Hector has overstepped his role as protector. Whether he was fated to do so or not remains a study for another place.[14]

The important point is that Hector, as the protector of Troy, instigates the fall of Troy when he sets fire to the Achaian ships. This truly ignites the Achaian response, which is marked by Achilles' return to the battle. Achilles states to Agamemnon's messengers that his return to the war is conditional on Hector's action; he says,

> . . .I shall not think again of the bloody fighting

> until such time as the son of wise Priam, Hektor the brilliant,
> comes all the way to the ships of the Myrmidons, and their shelters,
> slaughtering the Argives, and shall darken with fire our vessels.(9.650–53)

In the twelfth book, as the Trojans are on the threshold of the Achaian ships, Polydamas suggests that they retreat to Ilium (12.210–29). Hector responds to Polydamas with a physical threat, and leads the Trojans to the ships. By virtue of his unrelenting offensive attack Hector fulfills the conditions necessary for his own undoing. Although, in his answer to Polydamas, Hector enunciates a heroic code, and the heroic code especially suitable for him, it is a code which demonstrates more rhetoric than truth. Hector denies Polydamas' reading of the bird sign — that the Trojans should return to their home — and offers his own interpretation; "One bird sign is best: to fight in defence of our country"(12.243). Although Hector professes defence, his actions reveal an offensive motion. Polydamas recognizes the tenuous border between defence and attack; Hector's downfall is that he does not.

This point brings us to an interesting dilemma: when, in the heroic code, does discretion become acceptable? We have suggested that mortality is one of the basic tenets of heroic conduct and the ability to face mortality a necessity for heroism. When, then, is discretionary action laudable? In the difference between Hector's final confrontation with Achilles and Achilles final confrontation with his fate we may find some sort of answer.

Hector is the third of the heroes who undergoes a conscious debate in his mind. As Achilles bears down upon him, Hector begins a debate within himself.

> Ah me! If I go now inside the wall and the gateway,
> Poulydamas will be first to put a reproach upon me,
> since he tried to make me lead the Trojans inside the city
> on that accursed night when brilliant Achilles rose up,
> and I would not obey him, but that would have been far better.
> Now, since by my own recklessness I have ruined my people,
> I feel shame before the Trojans and the Trojan women with trailing
> robes, that someone who is less of a man than I will say of me:
> 'Hektor believed in his own strength and ruined his people.'
> Thus they will speak; and as for me, it would be much better
> at that time, to go against Achilleus, and slay him, and come back,
> or else be killed by him in glory in front of the city.
> Or if again I set down my shield massive in the middle
> and my ponderous helm, and lean my spear up against the rampart
> and go out as I am to meet Achilleus the blameless
> and promise to give back Helen, and with all her possessions. .
> .(22.99-114)

Thus, he ponders whether to live by the heroic code — to go to kill or be killed — or whether to live by discretion, by bargaining, mediating, and resolving in council not battle. The patriarch's lament is complete: "by my own recklessness I have ruined my people." Hector now recognizes his error in judgment; Polydamas, he admits to himself, was right. The scene is pathetic in its irony. The city's supreme defender must will himself out of the desire to enter his beloved home; Hector is forced into heroism and the things by which he is forced, his love for family and home, are shut to him in his final moments.

The description in the passage is symbolic. As Hector ponders the possible mediation session with Achilleus he imagines himself lifting off his armour — the image of the warrior putting aside his war gear. The "shield massive" and the "ponderous helm" are laid aside, the spear is leant against the ramparts, and conciliation starts. This image is an inversion of the typical portrayal of the warrior dressing for battle. The epic device of the warrior's sartorial preparation for war is captured in the description of Agamemnon in the second book (2.42-46). The most sublime expression of this archetypal preparation

for battle is in the description of Achilles as he arms himself (19.369-91). The hero who lives for glory, who fights with anger, dresses for the final confrontation. The hero who lives for family, who fights to defend his land, undresses himself, mentally. There is an added significance when we remember that Hector is doffing Achilles' old armour which he had taken from the slain Patroclus. Achilles, meanwhile, is donning his new armour: his shield, sword, helmet, and corselet made by the god Hephaistos, his spear, which no man could lift but himself, a gift from the centaur Cheiron. Achilles is armed with truly heavenly, truly graceful, armour. Hector has no such grace; his is a stolen brilliance — a man trying to achieve the aspect of a god-like hero. The confrontation between Hector and Achilles is that between a man and something more than a man. Achilles, as we have mentioned previously, is chosen. Heroism is not his to choose; it is his destiny. This is ironically asserted by the fact that he is given a choice of heroism; there is really no choice. This point will be dealt with in another place.

Hector, then, resolves the dilemma with a conclusion truly heroic; he recognizes that Achilles is beyond reconciliation, and he decides to fight, to accept mortality. He says,

> Better to bring on the fight with him as soon as it may be.
> We shall see to which one the Olympian grants the glory.(22.129-30)

But the image of the glorious Achilles bearing down on him causes Hector to shiver and to flee in fright (22.137). Achilles chases Hector around the Trojan walls three times; the prize for this footrace is Hector's life; the audience is all of Olympus (22.166). What, though, are we to make of the incongruency between Hector's mental resolution of heroic

acceptance and his action of retreat? Is Hector being debased by the poet? Logic, in that case, would be violated; Hector should be at his bravest when he encounters Achilles. Achilles' greatness increases in proportion to Hector's greatness. The problem could be explained away by offering the solution that the poet wishes to demonstrate the terror which Achilles drives into men's hearts, even the very bravest of men. But this solution still lacks one important consideration: the psychological foundation of heroism.

Hector shows a consciousness of the wages of war. Mortality has, as it were, impressed itself upon him. Heroism no longer means defending his family, or glory in defeating the Achaians; nor is it a compulsion inspired by a divine will. Heroism now shows itself in its most raw aspect: stark mortality, in the face of which all men flee. His actions are not, strictly speaking, unheroic. Neither god nor man calls Hector unheroic during this display. The only hint of any lack of heroism is seen in the similes; Hector is like a "fawn" and a "trembling dove." Although neither image is associated with fortitude, they are not meant to denigrate Hector's heroism. They are both images of prey; the dove is chased by a hawk and the fawn by a dog. The peace-loving fawn and dove are sought out by the dog and hawk, as Hector has been sought out by the image of his mortality. Zeus is even struck with pity at the sight of Hector, and chooses this moment to make mention of Hector's "valour"(22.175). When Zeus proposes that destiny be revoked and Hector be rescued, Athena's objection is based on the foundations of the situation — Hector's confrontation with mortality. Athena says,

Do you wish to bring back a man who is mortal, one long since

> doomed by his destiny, from ill-sounding death and release him?(22.179–80)

Zeus allows his death and declares that in his death he will be celebrated. Thus, mortality — the basis of heroism — finds one more hero to take to Hades. And he is a hero. The retreat, in the case of Hector, does not detract from his heroism. It is the human response to mortality, the response from which no hero is exempt save Achilles.

Achilles, then, we have seen, is the supreme hero of the Iliad. His behavior has been our index for judging the other heroes. Indeed, the poet of the Iliad implies that Achilles is the standard by which heroism is to be judged. The other Achaians, and Trojans, approach Achilles with a recognition of his status. Many an Achaian is called the best fighter of the Achaians, "save Achilles the godlike"; Achilles is both the exception and the code of measurement. It is, though, not his physical feats which interest us. He is, without doubt, the supreme physical specimen of his generation. Our inquiry is directed to his psychological motivation. Thus far, we have seen the heroic consciousness of Diomedes, Odysseus, and Hector. Each has questioned in his own mind the concept of heroism and the price of mortality. Achilles, although he undergoes no such mental debate on the battlefield, is the hero who, ultimately, questions the heroic code most thoroughly. The Iliad is truly based upon Achilles' inquiry into the heroic code. Nor does this inquiry cease with Achilles' death; as we shall see, Achilles, in the Odyssey, still questions the concept of heroism while he resides in Hades.

The Achilles of the Iliad has been given the lesson of heroism while but a youngster. His father has taught him "to be always best in

battle and pre-eminent beyond all others"(11.783).[15] He follows this code, but there comes a time when he begins to question the validity of such a life. In the ninth book, as the group of messengers approaches Achilles to reconcile him to Agamemnon, Achilles is singing of heroic feats — an act which anticipates the epic poem itself(9.189). After listening to the various arguments regarding why he should return to the battle, Achilles addresses the very basis of heroism. He states,

> Fate is the same for the man who holds back, the same if he fights hard.
> We are all held in a single honour, the brave with the weaklings.
> A man dies still if he has done nothing, as one who has done much.
> Nothing is won for me, now that my heart has gone through its afflictions
> in forever setting my life on the hazard of battle.(9.318-23)

Achilles sounds very much like the Preacher of Ecclesiastes; "all is vanity" is the basis of his speech. Heroism is equivalent to cowardice; prowess to weakness. The fate of both is mortality: "A man dies still if he has done nothing, as one who has done much." Achilles, having left the battle over Agamemnon's actions, has considered the proposal of heroism and found the cost of mortality to be high. The opening scene with Agamemnon was, as one critic notes, "merely the match that lit the fire."[16] The lumber — the basic discontent with the heroic life — was laid before this scene. Achilles, then, unlike the other heroes, is not shown in one brief moment of doubt. His life is a constant anguish; his heroism is truly passionate: he suffers it.

Achilles' heroism, the heroism he achieves within the Iliad, is gained when he overcomes the malaise to which consciousness of mortality has debased him. Furthermore, Achilles must retain that consciousness even while he dispels the malaise. Achilles' heroism is greater than

the other heroes' because his suffering — his cognizance of the heroic condition — is greater. Achilles is never deluded about the approach of his death; he recognizes and confronts it. A comparison with Hector will prove helpful in showing Achilles' heroism. Hector kills Patroclus and, as Patroclus delivers the prophecy of Hector's death in his final breath, Hector speaks to the slain body:

> Now though he was a dead man glorious Hektor spoke to him:
> 'Patroklos, what is this prophecy of my headlong destruction?
> Who knows if even Achilleus, son of lovely-haired Thetis,
> might before this be struck by my spear, and his own life perish?
> (16.858-61)

There is obviously a heroic element to the speech; fate will not deter my heroic endeavour, he defiantly claims. The tone and the message of Hector's reply, though, bespeak a heroism which is not his to claim.

In the same situation, Achilles stands over Hector's slain body. The scene is the same; the same formulaic verbal structure is used. The reply makes all the difference:

> Now though he was a dead man brilliant Achilleus spoke to him:
> 'Die: and I will take my own death at whatever time
> Zeus and the rest of the immortals choose to accomplish it.'(22.364-66)

Achilles' acceptance of his own mortality is his penultimate heroic deed.

The ultimate act is his decision — whether divinely influenced or no matters not — to return the body of Hector to Priam. Having recognized his own mortality, Achilles learns to respect the mortality of others. In returning Hector's body to Priam, Achilles completes the unique relationship he has with Andromache. When he had killed her father he, Andromache tells us,

> . . .did not strip his armour, for his heart respected the dead man,
> but [he] burned the body in all its elaborate war-gear
> and piled a grave mound over it. . .(6.417-19)

Achilles, when he returns the body of Hector, has consummated his own heroism; he has also concluded some mystical dominance over Andromache.

Achilles' heroism, then, is complete once again. His retreat from the war indicated a fracture of the heroic self; mortality had gained the upper hand in the lifelong duel. Achilles began to question the basis of his heroism, his life. His return to battle, with the full consciousness of the costs, his mortality (18.114-16), demonstrates a completeness of self. The defeat of Hector and the respect he shows to the slain body recall a time when he was heroic, the time he slew Andromache's father. The case is one, as it were, of heroism regained.[17]

The problem of when discretion is advisable is somewhat answered. Hector exceeds his capabilities; he acts heroically in a situation which does not warrant it. He does not accept his mortality until it looks him straight in the eyes, until its rank, hot breath is on his face. Achilles acts heroically in the time when heroism is called for; he recognizes ineluctable mortality and fights beside it. Submission to a will beyond one's own is the key. The submission, moreover, is one of passion; it is a constant denial of the will to live, a will which caused Hector to retreat in the crucial moment of battle, a will which, in this poem, only Achilles is able to subjugate. His heroism, for that reason, is the finest expression of heroism in the Iliad. And it is a heroism which ultimately rests in the psychological foundation of mortal man.

The Iliad is a poem of heroism in battle, heroism in the face of mortality. The Odyssey is a move away from that vision of heroism in battle; the Odyssey presents a new hero, a hero who is, basically, a survivor in a new world. The Odysseus who showed his battle mettle in the Trojan War shows a new fortitude on his return to Ithaca.

There is a tendency in Homer criticism to compare the Odyssey to the Iliad, a tendency which seems unlikely to yield the former work its due recognition. We, unhappily, will retain this invidious tendency in our discussion. We may, in defense, only offer the lame reason of necessity; ours is not to explicate either poem, but to determine the heroic code within each. And it is in light of the Iliad that the heroism of the Odyssey is best discussed, for our purposes.

II

> I am a part of all that I have met;
> Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
> Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades
> Forever and forever when I move.[18]

The poet of the Odyssey begins with an invocation which is quite different from the Iliad's. The Iliad begins with the statement of its subject: the wrath of Achilles. The Odyssey begins with a statement of its subject which is its hero; not an aspect of its hero, but its hero: Odysseus.

> Sing in me, Muse, and through me tell the story
> of that man skilled in all ways of contending,
> the wanderer, harried for years on end,
> after he plundered the stronghold
> on the proud height of Troy.
> He saw the townlands
> and learned the minds of many distant men,
> and weathered many bitter nights and days

> in his deep heart at sea, while he fought only
> to save his life, to bring his shipmates home.
> But not by will nor valor could he save them,
> for their own recklessness destroyed them all —
> children and fools, they killed and feasted on
> the cattle of Lord Helios, the Sun,
> and he who moves all day through heaven
> took from their eyes the dawn of their return.
> Of these adventures, Muse, daughter of Zeus,
> tell us in our time, lift the great song again.(i.1-10)

The invocation alerts us immediately to the change from the Iliadic world. There is a greater interest in the individual; the individual is the subject. A new order of conduct has been erected: one in which valour cannot save a life, in which wisdom is a necessity, in which the sins of a man visit him with an immediacy beyond human comprehension. The world of Odysseus is vastly different from the world of the Trojan War. Achilles could not survive in this world; survival is the key to this new order — "he fought only to save his life" — and Odysseus is, ultimately, the hero of surviving.[19] In the world of Odysseus, to survive is victory; to perish is defeat. If we may say that the Iliad is a poem glutted with death, both artistically and thematically, we may then say that the Odyssey is a poem flourishing with life. In its hero we find an indomitable will to live, a will which, we suggest, comprises the heroic code of the Odyssean world.

The means of surviving in the world of the Odyssey may appear unheroic in light of the glory of the heroic code which the Iliadic world possessed. Guile, practical wisdom, tact: these are the tools of heroism in the Odyssey. The genesis of the heroic code of the Odyssey is the goddess, Athena. The Odyssey offers a vastly different picture of Olympus from that of the Iliad. During the Trojan War, the gods were divided between the Trojans and the Achaians; there was a definite sense

of factionalism, a sense of hatred and revenge, a sense which is quite in keeping with a war which arose out of the mythic beauty contest amongst Aphrodite, Athena, and Hera. The goddesses in the Iliad do not forgive each other and each aligns herself with the faction which offers the opportunity for the most harm to the opposing goddess; in most cases, Hera and Athena, as the ungracious runners-up in the contest, devise ways of injuring Aphrodite. A good example of such an attitude is Athena's declaration to Diomedes in the fifth book; Athena warns him to avoid fighting with the gods, but with pointed interest she suggests that it is quite acceptable to stab Aphrodite (5.130-32). At the beginning of the twentieth book of the Iliad the poet catalogues the gods who enter the fray: five who support the Achaians, six who support the Trojans. Olympus is divided. In the Odyssey, the gods are unified; all admire Odysseus, save Poseidon. The tension between the gods is strangely missing in the Odyssey. One other difference between the two epics is the absolute support Odysseus receives from Athena.

Athena, in a way, dominates the Odyssey. She is Odysseus' guide, Telemachus' savior, and Penelope's genius. Thus, it is through Athena that most of the action of the Odyssey is executed. It is important to note Athena's patronage in the Olympian assembly. She is the patron goddess of wisdom and guile. She herself boasts to Odysseus, "My own fame is for wisdom among the gods — deceptions, too"(xiii.298-99). This epic is dominated by the two themes, wisdom and deception. The two are the basis for a new understanding of heroism. Odysseus is given the epithet "the canniest of men"(viii.151) and "the man skilled in all ways of contending"(i.1). His heroism is founded on guile and practical wisdom. There is in Odysseus a thirst for knowledge which is indicative

of a changing Greek society. In the invocation Odysseus is introduced as a traveller whose travels teach him the "minds of many distant men." There is an emphasis on knowledge in this epic which was entirely lacking in the Iliad. Initially, though, the most memorable aspect of the Odyssey is the sense of guile inherent in the work and the hero.

Athena is the patron goddess of weaving (vii.109-10), an occupation which is constantly aligned with deception. Penelope eludes marriage for three years by undoing at the loom at night what she had spent all day working on (ii.93-114). Antinoos, one of the suitors — the most wolfish of them, and the first to be struck down by Odysseus — calls Penelope "incomparably cunning"(ii.88). She, Antinoos further notes, is the recipient of "Athena's gifts — talent in handicraft and a clever mind"(ii.116-17). Penelope is given the epithets "careful," "pensive," and "circumspect."[20] She is a fit wife for canny Odysseus; on his return home it is she who manages to test him, to make him betray his knowledge of the situation of their bedroom. The weaving image carries beyond the confines of the bedroom. Odysseus phrases his request to Athena in terms of her specialty; when he asks for a means of disposing of the suitors, he says "Weave me a way to pay them back"(xiii.386). Weaving, whether in the confines of the bedroom or in the anticipation of battle, is a recurring metaphor. Weaving, aside from its symbolic value as a form of deception, is a tactical art in itself. It is a quiet, subtle, clever craft. Compared to the craft of outright battle with its simplistic rules — kill or be killed — weaving contains a delicacy of touch. To weave, like Penelope, one must be clever. Odysseus is the consummate weaver; his life, his re-presentation of himself and his

world is a fabrication: "I am Laertes' son, Odysseus. Men hold me formidable for guile in peace and war"(ix.19).

The Odyssey is itself a type of tapestry, with its interwoven episodes and relations of past events. Professor Whitman has suggested that the artistry of the Odyssey is a shift from that of the Iliad. The Iliad is a poem based on geometric art, significantly the art of sepulchral vases; the Odyssey is proto-Attic art, an art which demonstrates a shift in the basic conceptions of humanity and its contexts.[21] It is an art which focuses "on life in all its variety and directness." It is an art which, like the woof on the loom, is reticulated or decussated with interstices between the intersections.

Athena, as we have seen, shows Penelope and Odysseus the means of success by guile. Telemachus, like Penelope, is a fit representative of Odysseus' family. Athena comes to Ithaca in disguise and suggests to Telemachus that the means he should employ to rid the house of the suitors is either "outright or by guile"(i.296). Telemachus is a quick study and, like his father, can fabricate a story extemporaneously; when questioned about the guest he has entertained, he claims it was Mentes.

> So said Telemakhos, though in his heart
> he knew his visitor had been immortal.(i.420-21)

Telemachus has learned the essential craft of his parents: to create an external fabric which will ever veil the internal truth. The family that lies together stays together.

Guile, in this world, is a necessity to survival and survival is heroic. Odysseus, crafty and resourceful, is the master of guile. In an interesting interchange with Athena we can see the implications of the relationship between the goddess and the hero. As Odysseus awakes

after being deposited in Ithaca, Athena descends from Olympus in the form of a shepherd and describes the land to the waking king. He replies to her with an elaborately woven tale,

> . . .not that he told the truth,
> but, just as she did, held back what he knew,
> weighing within himself at every step
> what he made up to serve his turn.(xiii.253-55)

As Odysseus finishes his tale, Athena, who has now changed her shape to a woman "no doubt skilled at weaving splendid things"(xiii.289), addresses Odysseus adoringly:

> Whoever gets around you must be sharp
> and guileful as a snake; even a god
> might bow to you in ways of dissimulation.
> You! You chameleon!
> Bottomless bag of tricks! Here in your own country
> would you not give your strategems a rest
> or stop spellbinding for an instant?
> You play a part as if it were your own tough skin.
> No more of this though. Two of a kind, we are,
> contrivers, both. Of all men now alive
> you are the best in plots and story telling.(xiii.291-98)

One critic has remarked that Athena so closely resembles the hero that she is not so much a patroness as she is an "alter ego."[22] They are, indeed, a credibly suitable pair.

The relationship becomes more credible yet. Athena, as the goddess of wisdom, is the most fit Olympian to guide Odysseus on his journey. In a way, Odysseus' journey is an odyssey for knowledge. As we have seen in the invocation, Odysseus learned the minds of foreign men. He, moreover, learns from the magical world of Circe and Calypso and from the mysterious world of Hades and the Sirens. Odysseus, as the traveller after knowledge, is the image which Tennyson caught in his poem "Ulysses." The persona, Ulysses, speaks:

> . . .Life piled on life
> Were all too little, and of one to me
> Little remains, but every hour is saved
> From that eternal silence, something more,
> A bringer of new things; and vile it were
> For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
> And this gray spirit yearning in desire
> To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought. 23

The search for wisdom is an aspect of a new heroism. And wisdom is not gained but through pain. Thus it is that Odysseus' knowledge is gained on the sea, which is the domain of the one god who is antagonistic towards him. Odysseus' search for knowledge is as heroic, and as passionate, as Achilles' search for an understanding of his mortality.

Odysseus even descends into the underworld in search of knowledge. His main intent in Hades is to search out Teiresias, "forever charged with reason even among the dead"(x.493). Teiresias prophesies Odysseus' future which, in a way, represents Odysseus' gaining the consummate knowledge about himself. Knowledge is also of great importance in the meeting with Circe. Circe is a witch who can cast a spell on the body of men. When she metamorphoses Odysseus' crew they become "swinish now, though minds were still unchanged"(x.240). Odysseus must carry "moly" with him in order to counteract the effects of Circe. Moly, a herb which Milton gives the significance of grace in Comus, is a "holy force" in the Odyssey; it, Hermes tells Odysseus, "will keep your mind and senses clear"(x.293). Moly is a gift which arms Odysseus, mentally. Circe can metamorphose the body, but the mind is out of her range. The mind, though, properly armed, can protect the body. Moly, in this case, protects Odysseus from a porcine fate. The mind saves the body; it is a heroic code not found in the Iliad.

The episode with the Sirens is sometimes used against Odysseus in later tradition. The Sirens, Odysseus' detractors claim, are an example of sensual pleasure which Odysseus could not pass without experiencing. One modern poet portrays Odysseus as a pure sensualist — "flesh had made him blind" — and uses the episode with the Sirens to carry the point. Robert Graves writes,

> They multiplied into the Sirens' throng,
> Forewarned by fear of whom he stood bound fast
> Hand and foot helpless to the vessel's mast,
> Yet would not stop his ears: daring their song
> He groaned and sweated till that shore was past.[24]

The Sirens are conventionally seen as sensual temptresses but in the Odyssey, as Professor Stanford notes, their appeal to Odysseus is "primarily intellectual."[25] The song of the Sirens, as they themselves claim, is a temptation to the knowledge-seeker. They sing,

> Sea rovers here take joy
> Voyaging onward,
> As from our song of Troy
> Greybeard and rower-boy
> Goeth more learned. (xii.186-88)

The complaint against Odysseus' allowing himself to be "dared" by the song of the Sirens is groundless; Odysseus, indeed, shows himself to be especially heroic in this exposure to temptation. Later tradition, notably Milton and Spenser, will assert that such an exposure is a necessary concomitant to heroism. A heroism which relies on trial, "and trial is by what is contrary," is the heroism of Odysseus.

If our discussion of Homer seems to have in it an imposed Judaeo-Christian orientation — suggesting that Odysseus' heroism is of the same substance as Job's and Christ's — it may be argued that Homer does not at any time posit any implicit or explicit criticism of the

heroic code of Odysseus. And there are implications that exposure and denial are co-existent in that heroic code. Odysseus is referred to as "self-possessed"(v.437).[26] Teiresias admonishes Odysseus to "deny" himself (xi.105), and Athena admires Odysseus for his "detachment"(xiii.330). Trial, to Odysseus, is a requisite part of revelation, either self-revelation or revelation of self to others. Before he reveals his identity to his swineherd, his son, his wife, he tries them. He maintains his secret identity so that he is able to try his household servants; he says

> But you and I alone must learn how far
> the women are corrupted; we should know
> how to locate good men among our hands,
> the loyal and respectful, and the shirkers. . .(xvi.304-06)

Likewise, Odysseus, as he approaches his father whom he has not seen for twenty years, ponders in his mind the means of revealing himself to his father:

> The son paused by a tall pear tree and wept,
> then inwardly debated: should he run
> forward and kiss his father, and pour out
> his tale of war, adventure, and return,
> or should he first interrogate him, test him?
> Better that way, he thought —
> first draw him out with sharp words, trouble him.(xxiv.234-40)

Trial is a natural means of asserting what is true and what is false. Odysseus, who fabricates an image of himself and creates a fictional world around himself, does not allow himself to be duped by semblances. Better, he thinks, to make a trial, to test gold by fire. Once again, this concept of trial may be traced to the genial spirit of this epic, Athena. Athena herself tries Odysseus and Telemachus. At the onset of the fight against the suitors, Athena encourages the father and his son.

> For all her fighting word
> she gave no overpowering aid — not yet;
> father and son must prove their mettle still.(xxii.236-37)

The Odyssey is full of trials, some imposed by the gods on Odysseus, some self-imposed by Odysseus, and some imposed by Odysseus on others. A world which is woven in the mind is best tried to prove its mettle.

So far, then, we have suggested a heroic code which is based on guile, on wisdom and knowledge, on trial as its basis. It is a heroic code which would have been frowned upon in the Iliadic world. That world, however, was a world of mortality, where death was the dominant spirit and acceptance of death a heroic accomplishment. The Odyssean world is a world of life, where living is an accomplishment. The heroic conduct of an Achilles would be futile against the magic, the guile, and the wisdom of this world. And the poem makes an implicit comparison of the two heroic codes, placing in apposition, as it were, the heroism of Achilles and the heroism of Odysseus.

The purely combative hero — the hero who fights the gods, as Diomedes and Achilles do — is no longer a possibility. Odysseus does not undertake the new heroic code for reasons of ease; it is forced upon him. When Circe tells Odysseus about Scylla, the man-eating monster who will devour six of his crew, he asks whether it is possible for him to fight this monster. Circe replies,

> Must you have battle in your heart forever?
> The bloody toil of combat? Old contender,
> will you not yield to the immortal gods?
> That nightmare cannot die, being eternal
> evil itself — horror, and pain, and chaos;
> there is no fighting her, no power can fight her,
> all that avails is flight.(xii.116-20)

Odysseus proposes the traditional heroism — fight and possible death; Circe, who knows better, suggests a new heroism — flight and necessary survival.

The implicit comparison of Odysseus to Achilles is conducted through two episodes. In a comparison of the two episodes we receive a kind of conclusion to both epics. This proposition does suggest that the Iliad and the Odyssey have the same author, an idea not prevalent in present scholarship, but it does not necessarily rely on such a premise. The author of the Odyssey needs only a familiarity with the Iliad to carry our point, an idea scholarship has never denied.[27] The first episode is the journey to the underworld. As Odysseus sees the spirit of Achilles, he says to him:

> But was there ever a man more blest by fortune
> than you, Akhilleus? Can there ever be?
> We ranked you with the immortals in your lifetime,
> we Argives did, and here your power is royal
> among the dead men's shades. Think, then, Akhilleus:
> you need not be so pained by death.(xi.482-86)

Achilles answers bitterly:

> . . .Let me hear no smooth talk
> of death from you, Odysseus, light of councils.
> Better, I say, to break sod as a farm hand
> for some poor country man, on iron rations,
> than lord it over all the exhausted dead.(xi.488-91)

Achilles, it seems, is discontented with his fate. It is especially fit that he mentions the idea of domestic labour in juxtaposition to his code of heroism. Odysseus does not shrink away from labour, domestic or bellicose. His heroism has a wider range of activity. He can kill and he can reap. The visit to the underworld comprises the eleventh book; Odysseus shortly after this scene learns from Circe the new code of

survival: "all that avails is flight." He lives accordingly; he lives by guile and wisdom, by tact and patience. Even when he defeats the suitors, he exercises tact in his patience, waiting for the proper moment to act, fighting the urge to kill each one as he insults him.

The second episode with Achilles follows the death of the suitors. As Odysseus and Penelope make love and he relates his history to her, the spirits of the suitors flee to Hades. They arrive in Hades and the first spirits they meet are those of Achilles, Patroclus, Antilochos, Ajax, and Agamemnon — the first three the relics of the Trojan War, the next two the heroes who could not alter their heroism to fit the new code of survival after the war. In an interesting conversation between Achilles and Agamemnon, an exchange which bespeaks a reconciliation which had never truly been achieved on the plains of Ilium, Achilles' heroism is re-asserted. Agamemnon points, almost wistfully, to the sepulchral vase which contains Patroclus', Antilochos', and Achilles' bones, three heroes who died heroic deaths — a mortal brotherhood in battle. Agamemnon then relates Achilles' burial. Thetis, Achilles' goddess-mother, brought the trophies for the magnificent games following the funeral. The muses themselves sang the death dirge:

> Then we heard the Muses sing
> a threnody in nine immortal voices.
> No Argive there but wept, such keening rose
> from that one Muse who led the song.(xxiv.60-62)

And the final acclaim was attributed to Achilles. Agamemnon points it out to Peleus' son:

> You perished, but your name will never die.
> It lives to keep all men in mind of honor
> forever, Akhilleus.(xxiv.92-94)

Achilles does not answer; there is no need. Achilles died at the time appointed him, happily, because he could not fit in the Odyssean world. Agamemnon, who learned of his inaptitude in the Odyssean world, is proof physical (actually, his form is spiritual) and verbal to show Achilles that he has perished in the fulness of his time.

The two episodes with Achilles show an acceptance of each hero — Achilles and Odysseus — of his assigned heroic code. It is significant that Odysseus wins Achilles' glorious armour at Troy and loses it on the way home; all vestiges of the old order are stripped from him. Naked he arrives on the various shores which measure his life's odyssey. The twenty-fourth book of the Odyssey — one is tempted to say the ultimate book of the Homeric binary — concludes the heroic codes of both heroes; and each is in his sphere. Achilles is dead, but his immortal name lives on earth; Odysseus is alive, and restless: he has journeys yet to travel, trials yet to survive. As he says to Penelope,

> My dear, we have not won through to the end.
> One trial — I do not know how long — is left for me
> to see fulfilled.(xxiii.248-50)

The mortal hero has perished and occupies his immortal throne, which, paradoxically, could only be achieved through death. The travelling hero lives on, still travelling, a chore which he can only achieve by surviving. The old heroic code is fading into the horizon; a new heroic code is at its noontide. The poem ends the way it began, with the goddess Athena still in disguise: "still she kept the form and voice of Mentor."

III

> The sacred Muses have made alwaies clame
> To be the Nourses of nobility,
> And Registres of everlasting fame,
> To all that armes professe and chevalry.[28]

From the image of Achilles' singing the tales of heroes to Patroclus (9.189) to the final image of the Muses singing the fame of Achilles to all men for all time (xxiv.60-62), we can see that the bard is an important aspect of heroism. In the Odyssey, the bard Phemios is spared by Odysseus. His supplication shows he has an understanding of his position:

> My gift is song for men and for the gods undying.
> My death will be remorse for you hereafter.
> No one taught me: deep in my mind a god
> shaped all the various ways of life in song.
> And I am fit to make verse in your company
> as in the god's.(xxii.345-49)

The other poet of the Odyssey is Demodocus, the blind bard of the Phaeacians. His initial song is the story of "the clash between Odysseus and Akhilleus"(viii.75). Odysseus will later cut a piece of pork and give it to the poet, claiming:

> All men owe their honor to the poets — honor
> and awe, for they are dearest to the Muse
> who puts upon their lips the ways of life.(viii.479-80)

Odysseus then asks the bard to sing of the Trojan Horse episode, a time when Odysseus' heroic craftiness was at its utmost power. The Trojan War takes on a new aspect in the Odyssey; it is not the mortal conflict which the poet of the Iliad portrayed. It is a subject of song:

> That was all gods' work, weaving ruin there
> so it should make a song for men to come!(viii.579-80)

In the Aeneid, we shall see how Aeneas' reaction to the song of the war from which he is escaping is part of the development of his code of

heroic dolor. The poet, though, becomes a maker of monuments; his vision of heroism is one by which future generations shall judge that age. The hero, without a poet, is but a temporal thing. As Horace wrote:

> Many heroes lived before Agamemnon,
> but all are oppressed in unending night,
> unwept, unknown, because they lack
> a dedicated bard. [29]

With Homer begins our survey of heroism, but also with Homer begins heroic poetry. And, as our discussion of Virgil and Milton hopes to show, all future heroic poetry rests on an acceptance, a tempering, or a rejection, of Homer's vision of heroism.

Chapter Two

The Burden of Piety: Heroism in The Aeneid

> Thou that seest Universal
> Nature moved by Universal Mind;
> Thou majestic in thy sadness
> at the doubtful doom of human kind; [1]

Virgil offers a unique perspective to our study; he conceptualizes a heroic code different from that of Homer, and anticipating that of Dante and Milton. It should be emphasized from the outset, however, that we will not consider Virgil as either a diluted Homer, one who could not capture the physical magnificence of Homer's hero-warriors, or as a Christian poet before his time, one who made glorious the virtue of goodness but who could not forego the heroism of battle. Virgil is sui generis; he does accept Homer as his predecessor (what epic poet could not?), but he does not servilely "Homerize" Roman history. The Aeneid is, quite simply, a work with its own concerns, its own interpretation of history, and its own heroic code. Virgil is, for us, a historical stepping-stone in the conception of heroism. This, once again we must emphasize, is not to detract from his own poetic existence. Virgil is not Homeric in tone or achievement, nor, we conjecture, did he attempt to be. Virgil's heroic code is, however, delineated through an examination of the Homeric heroic code. Aeneas is juxtaposed, as it were, with Dido and Turnus, who both exhibit Homeric heroic traits, to show the development of a new heroism. An examination of how Aeneas' heroism differs from that of the traditional heroic code will entail a comparison of his actions with those of the characters who represent

the tradition. These characters fall into place within the poem as foils for Aeneas; and the careful structure of the Aeneid implies Virgil's desire that his hero be understood in relation to the Homeric hero. Our study, therefore, will attempt to delineate Aeneas' heroic code as it is revealed through his interactions with Dido and Turnus. A study of Aeneas' heroic code, moreover, must needs examine certain developments of his own character. It is, in fine, a heroic code which does point to a new development in the state of human culture. Aeneas, one critic has noted, is, ultimately, a "civilized hero." [2]

I

Virgil's epic, as we have strongly suggested, is its own poetic realization; its debt to Homer is formal, only. Historically, however, Virgil has been viewed as an imitator of Homer, and not a good one at that. If we take Henry Fielding's psychological interpretation of the length of the Aeneid as an example of reader response to Virgil, we may see how the Roman bard has not profited by comparison with the Greek. Fielding writes:

> Virgil hath given us his poem in twelve books, an argument of his modesty; for by that, doubtless, he would insinuate[3] that he pretends to no more than half the merit of the Greek.

Perhaps the best means of suppressing the view of Virgil as Homer's shadow is not to mention them in the same breath. This, though, is impossible, for Virgil meant a comparison to be drawn between his work and Homer's.

The basic structure of the Aeneid is based, as critics as early as the fourth century have noted, on the two epics of Homer.[4] As Virgil commences his epic he sings, "arma virumque cano." Servius, the fourth

century commentator on the Aeneid, suggested that this initial phrase of the poem states Virgil's intent: to sing of the Odyssean adventures of Aeneas in the first six books and to sing of the Iliadic adventures of Aeneas in the last six books; the "man," Odyssean, the "arms," Iliadic. There seems to be ample evidence to support Servius' observation. As the Aeneid begins, Virgil's invocation smacks of the beginning of the Odyssey:

> My song is arms and a man, the first of Troy
> to come to Italy and Lavinian shores,
> a fated fugitive, harried on land and sea
> by heaven's huge might and Juno's endless hate,
> harried by war, till he could found the City
> and bring his gods to Latium, whence the race
> of Latins, our Alban sires, and towering Rome. (1.1-7)

The "fated fugitive" (fato profugus) is "harried" on his journey, as was another wanderer, Odysseus. The trip from Troy to home was treacherous, especially in the case of Aeneas who left Troy to found a new home. The seventh book has another invocation, one which sounds remarkably Iliadic:

> Come, Erato, now! I'll tell of days long past,
> of kings, conditions, times, when Latium first
> saw strangers land in force on Western shores;
> I'll call to mind how conflict first arose.
> Blest lady, instruct me as I sing of wars
> and wounds, of kings whose courage was their doom,
> of Tuscan bands of all the Westland forced
> to fight. My greater history, greater work,
> I now begin. (7.37-45)

Significantly, this invocation is sung immediately after Aeneas and his men steer their ship towards Italian land. Their odyssey complete, Virgil invokes his "maius opus." The first half of the Aeneid tells of the odyssey of Aeneas and his men; the second half tells of the wars

which they suffer in the founding of Italy. The Aeneid does, then, seem a composite of the Homeric worlds.

Virgil is not in the shadow of Homer, in the sense that Homer overshadows Virgil's work; rather, Virgil is in the shadow of Homer, in the sense that any poet who undertook the epic form owed a debt to the greatest of its practictioners. This debt, however, is not one of emulation, for Virgil did not attempt to copy Homer slavishly. Rather, Virgil refined the Homeric vision of heroism to fit the Roman ideal. For an eloquent statement of the process Virgil undertook, we may turn to the psychologist, William James. When he was finishing his great treatise on the Principles of Psychology, he wrote to his brother Henry James, "I have to forge every sentence in the teeth of irreducible and stubborn facts." [5] Such, we may imagine, were Virgil's feelings. Homer was the poetry of heroism. The centuries had produced no poet capable of emulating or altering his vision. Rather, heroic poetry was redundant and reductive. Epic form was suffering from poor poets with poor vision. Virgil, when he came to write his epic of Italy, took Homer's genre (so, we think, it will ever be known), not to show that Homer is Virgil's model, but because Homer is heroic poetry. That is the stubborn and irreducible fact Virgil would have to overcome. How does one refine the raw genius of Homer? Virgil, we suggest, attempted to do so by various means. He portrayed Homeric episodes and character types in different situations. By altering the perspective, Virgil could define his own heroic vision. Symbolism is another means Virgil offers: to show the metaphysical heroic code through a metaphysical poetics. Finally, Virgil imposed one overwhelming metaphor which shapes his work, a metaphor which Homer's art did not make explicit: the birth

of a nation. Virgil, then, to state it in its baldest terms, uses Homer; but how he uses Homer is what makes all the difference.

Virgil's art, we have stated, relies on a base of symbolism. Professor Poschl states in Virgil's art "the symbolic content dominates the concrete."[6] There is an essential core of metaphoric dimension which marks the Aeneid's implicit universality.[7] The tale of Aeneas is the tale of many things; it is the story of Italy, first and foremost, but it is also the story of Every(Roman)man's sufferings, of how one should conduct oneself. It is also the story of Augustus, the patron of Virgil and leader of Italy, the ancestor of Aeneas: the Aeneid presents a portrayal of the "Augustan hero." And it does so in juxtaposition with the traditional Homeric hero.

An examination of how Virgil uses Homer will demonstrate the difference between their two visions. Virgil offers episodes which reflect like episodes in the Iliad, and characters which have their prototypes in the Iliad. Virgil's use of these motifs shows his tempering of the Homeric vision of heroism.

II

Two episodes crucial to the Aeneid are the Dido episode and the Turnus episode. Each is taken from one of Homer's epics; the Dido episode is Odyssean, the Turnus Iliadic. Through Virgil's treatment of each episode we may see his concerns, and the development of his heroic code.

The story of Aeneas and Dido has been, historically, the most popular episode in the Aeneid, usually, however, for the wrong reasons. Tradition has made Aeneas' and Dido's love affair something mythic,

something romantic in the extreme. Virgil's treatment of the story, however, does not suggest that it be taken as anything romantic. On the symbolic level, Dido represents a hindrance to the achievement of Aeneas' ultimate destiny, the founding of Rome. On the physical level, the affair with Dido is the story of an "amorem infandum"(4.85), a "love abominable," a love which does not establish, but breaks, bonds.

Aeneas lands on the shores of Carthage in the first book; the second and third books relate all the events preceding that time. Aeneas relates the narrative of the fall of Troy and the various ports at which he has tried to establish Italy. The fourth book begins with the revelation of Dido's love for Aeneas, a love, not unlike Desdemona's, based on a tale well told.

> . . .My story being done,
> She gave me for my pains a world of sighs.
> She swore, i' faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;
> 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.
> She wished she had not heard it; yet she wished
> That heaven had made her such a man. She thanked me;
> And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
> I should but teach him how to tell my story,
> And that would woo her.[8]

So well told is the story, indeed, that Dido begins to think of betraying her firm bond to her dead husband, Sychaeus. She begins by asserting to her sister, Anna, that bond in terms which leave no doubt as to its strength: "animo fixum immotumque"(4.15). The inflammatory love which holds her, though, causes her to weaken her staunch fidelity. She claims that she might be able ("potui") to succumb to this one sin: "succumbere culpae"(4.19). Culpa, it should be noted, is used four times in the Aeneid, half of those occurring in the fourth book.[9] Dido

awakes out of this reverie and asserts that she shall remain faithful to the memory of Sychaeus:

> But, oh, may the earth gape wide and deep for me,
> or the father almighty blast me down to death,
> to the paling ghosts of hell and the pit of night,
> before I play honor false or break her laws.
> The man who first knew union with me stole
> my heart; let him keep and guard it in the tomb.(4.24-29)

Dido, at the end of her speech, has asserted her fidelity to Sychaeus. Anna then gives advice to her sister, and it is advice which tempts Dido to succumb. Anna's argument sounds like a Horatian carpe diem poem: "why squander youth on endless, lonely grief, / . . .without the gifts of love?"(4.32-33). Anna counsels the use of deception, and does so in the most Odyssean terms. "Weave ("innecte") tissues of delay," she offers; the reader familiar with the Odyssey would have undoubtedly picked up on the allusion to the guile of the Odyssean world. Anna's rhetoric is persuasive enough to affect Dido, who consequently succumbs to this culpae.

This scene between Dido and her sister is an example of the delectatio morosa motif, the lingering thought which precedes a lapse in proper behaviour. Dido begins with a lingering delectation on her love for Aeneas, punctuated by her acknowledged "ability" to succumb. She resolves to abstain from this ability, invoking a curse upon herself if she does not. Anna renews the delecation by offering advice of means; and, ultimately, Dido succumbs:

> Such talk inflamed her heart with uncurbed passion,
> gave hope to doubt, and let restraint go free. (4.54-55)

The motif of delectatio morosa, as will be seen, plays an important role in Paradise Lost. In a way, the motif has also been evident in the

Iliad, in the case of Odysseus who had to overcome the self-suggested temptation to flee the battle.

Dido, then, falls madly in love with Aeneas. Her love, though, is not a carefree, giddy type of love. It is profoundly disturbing, both to herself and to her country. The work of building, of establishing, of defending, Carthage stops:

> Her towers grew no taller; her army ceased
> maneuvers and worked no more to strengthen port
> and bastion for war: work hung half-done, walls stood
> huge but unsteady; bare scaffolds met the sky. (4.86–89)

Carthage has, as it were, come to a standstill. This is symbolic of the work of founding Italy as well; it, too, lies "half-done."

The marriage between Dido and Aeneas is also marked by symbolic meaning. Initially, the poet tells us that the day was the genesis of evil: "ille dies primus leti primusque malorum / causa fuit"(4.169–70). With that ominous signal, the marriage is performed. It is, significantly, a marriage of nature; the bride's attendants are Juno and Earth; the witness is lightning; and the Nymphs of the hill perform the nuptial moaning (4.166–68). The marriage ceremony is conducted in the foreground of a raging storm. A storm, it will be recalled, also threw Aeneas and his ships at Carthage. The bond between the couple is natural, which Professor Bowra suggests is not the legal Roman wedding and, as Aeneas is "already a typical Roman," the marriage would to a degree be invalid to Aeneas.[10] It certainly is not invalid to Dido; she refers to their marriage not less than three times when she implores him not to leave. Aeneas' answer, though, reveals that he considers their bond not binding:

> But now to the point. I did not mean (believe me!)
> to slip away by stealth, nor ever feigned
> the wedding torch, or made such league with you. (4.337-39)

The bond is natural; there is no denying that. But Aeneas is bound to another spouse, his destiny. And nature is no reason in the face of that matrimony. This is not to impose a seventeenth-century contradistinction between nature and grace on a work of an epoch that did not hold those beliefs; but throughout the epic Aeneas has to will himself out of natural actions: he must labor when tired, travel when weary, live when death is his desire. He must give up all his natural bonds, save one. Nature is, in a sense, an enemy of Aeneas' ultimate destiny, his graceful calling.

Indeed, when Aeneas is subjected to Dido's pleas, God and Fate act in his defence: "Fate blocked the way; God closed his ears to pity"(4.440). The book began with Dido forsaking her rigid pledge, her "animo fixum immotumque"; Aeneas ends the relationship by reverting that lapse: "mens immota manet"(4.449). Thus ends their "improbe Amor"(4.412). There remains only Dido's vengeance to be shown, and her heroic death:

> I've lived, and run the course that fate assigned;
> my shade now goes in glory beneath the earth. (4.653-54)

Dido dies, however, before her fated course has been run:

> (For not at her earned and fated hour she died,
> but in a flash of fury, before her days:
> Proserpina had not yet cut the lock
> from her head, nor sentenced her to life below.) (4.696-99)

What are we to make of this breach of fate? Is this a symbol of how Dido's and Aeneas' love may have been achieved despite his claim of the necessity of fate? Rather, it seems that Dido is a temptation, the

greatest temptation of the first six books, obstructing Aeneas' destiny. Her death shows how she has averted the divine will; the founding of Italy may have well been that divine will she averted.

The Odyssean background to the episode is important. Odysseus was also tempted by women on foreign lands, and he, as well, had to forego their proferred love in order to make his way home. Circe, Calypso, even, to a degree, Nausikaa, are temptations Odysseus has to reject for his own hearth, for his own destiny. And, as we recall, trial is all-important to the Odyssey. Likewise, Dido represents a temptation, a temptation to which she herself has already succumbed. The scene between Anna and Dido now takes on an added significance; it may have been the interchange between Dido and Aeneas if God had not shut his ears.

On the political allegorical level, Dido represents more than just a temptation to confound the discovery of Italy. She is a type of Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt who had so profoundly disturbed Roman politics for decades of Virgil's life.[11] The similarities of the two North African queens are remarkable: both are driven from their heritage by a brother, both fall in love with a Roman (Aeneas being the original Roman), and both commit suicide. Perhaps, Horace's ode may serve to demonstrate the fervour Cleopatra stirred within the Roman breast, and the heroic status she is given at her death:

> Her face serene, she courageously viewed
> her fallen palace. With fortitude
> she handled fierce snakes, her corporeal
> frame drank in their venom:
>
> resolved for death, she was brave indeed.
> She was no docile woman but truly scorned
> to be taken away in her enemy's ships,

deposed, to an overweening Triumph.[12]

This is the conclusion to a poem that began with a call to revelry because the "crazy queen" and "her polluted train of evil debauchees" have been defeated. Dido may not be an explicit Cleopatra-type, but the implications are there in Virgil's treatment of her.

Dido, moreover, represents a type of heroism; as we have seen, she kills herself heroically, in her death achieving an ultimate victory in defiance of fate. Her heroism, then, is a nice juxtaposition to Aeneas'. Dido is the type of the egocentric hero, who lives life for glory (Dido's death wish is "glory beneath the earth"), and whose glory rests on her ability to injure and to destroy herself and others. In pain, she relieves herself with a natural response (albeit, a somewhat tainted natural response). In contrast, Aeneas cannot relieve himself by self-slaughter; his response must be super-natural, he must overcome his desire for rest and death in order to carry on his assigned work.

Dido is the second in an interesting trilogy of Aeneas' spouses. Creusa represents the old order; she is Aeneas' Trojan wife, the wife who, like the city, is lost. It is Creusa who returns to Aeneas in a dream to tell him of his destined wife, the Italian Lavinia. Dido is the second wife (in her eyes), the wife who represents the natural love the travel-weary Aeneas would like to have. Thus, Dido offers Aeneas a restful ease: "Now they were warming the winter with rich exchange"(4.193). Theirs is a marriage of nature, and one, like all natural responses, which Aeneas must reject for his destined responsibility. Lavinia is the third wife, the one who represents the ultimate destiny of the hero. Aeneas, as the invocation has made clear, must land on "Lavinian shores," must fight Lavinia's suitor, and must

marry Lavinia. And it is all a chore. There is no hint that he loves Lavinia, or that she loves him. Rather, she is dismayed at the loss of Turnus as a fiance. Like his destiny, we never see Aeneas hug Lavinia; like that with his destiny, it is a cold, supernatural relationship.

Aeneas, like the heroic code he illustrates, is developed through a comparison with the heroism Dido represents. Hers is an egocentric heroism, a code of glory above all, and a glory achieved by personal action in the face of fate. Aeneas is the hero whose fame is achieved by submission to a higher will, a glory of national proportions. He does not fight fate; he is its agent. His heroism, in juxtaposition to Dido's, is one of disinterested responsibility. Always there is a larger, more important cause compelling Aeneas than that of personal glory. Personal glory will ultimately be his, but at a cost he would not naturally wish to pay. From the egocentricity of glory and mortality, which characterized the Homeric hero, we have a new heroism of ethnocentricity and genesis: the birth of a new country.

III

The parturition of Italy involves Aeneas' finding the proper wife. Creusa is the Trojan figure, like Andromache and Niobe; Dido the foreign temptress, like Circe and Calypso. Lavinia is the Italian spouse destiny has proposed. With Lavinia our study approaches the second episode through which Virgil refines the Homeric heroic code.

When Aeneas makes his <u>catabasis</u> in the sixth book, Deiphobe, priestess of Apollo, prophesies his future:

> My son, you have passed all perils of the sea,
> but ashore still worse await. To Latium's land
> the sons of Troy shall come (this care dismiss),

> but coming shall find no joy. War, terror, war,
> I see, and Tiber foaming red with blood.
> You'll face a Simois, Xanthus, Greeks encamped;
> in Latium now a new Achilles lives,
> he, too, a goddess' son. Troy's burden, Juno,
> will never leave you; humble, in need, you'll plead
> with every Italian tribe and town for help.
> Cause of disaster again a foreign bride,
> a match with a woman not of Troy. (6.83–94)

Deiphobe's prophesy divides the Odyssean adventures — "perils of the sea" — from the Iliadic adventures — "War, terror, war." The sixth book is the island between the two halves, in which Aeneas, now fully matured and cognizant of his fate, rests before he becomes the hero of Virgil's "greater work." The images of the Iliad are explicit: the rivers of Troy, the Simois and the Xanthus, the image of encamped Greeks, the figure of a "new Achilles," the immediate cause of the war, "again a foreign bride." It is by altering the perspective of the Iliad that Virgil is able to insist upon his code of heroism. The new Achilles' homeland is the battlefield; his fiancee is the prize. So, Juno refers to Aeneas as a new Paris, a stealer of other men's wives and a hero under the tutelage of Venus (7.319–20). We can see that the myth of the beauty contest between Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena — now, Juno, Venus, and Minerva — still plays an all-important role in epic tradition. The altered perspective gives Troy a sort of revenge; the new Achilles will fall at the hand of a new Paris, but the ultimate outcome will be a Trojan victory, their last before they give up their nationalism in favour of their new Latin heritage.

Turnus, critics have noted, is a blend of Achilles and Hector.[13] For our purposes, the debate about whether he is more like Achilles or Hector is relatively unimportant. He represents Homeric heroism in its physical glory. If we examine his Achillean stature and his Hector-like

qualities, and examine both in juxtaposition to Aeneas, we will see a distinctly new heroic code in the comparison.

Turnus, having been inflamed by Allecto, becomes Achillean in his wrath:

> He raged, bloodthirsty, murderous, mad for war,
> ruled by his anger. . .(7.461-61)

The same qualities of heroic anger — the subject of the Iliad — that made Achilles heroic are characteristic of Turnus. Turnus, moreover, is the initiator of battle; he says of himself, "primus in hostem," and his spear throw is the "principium pugnae" — the "first act of war"(9.51,53). Indeed, Turnus compares himself to Achilles when he taunts Pandarus thus: "Tell Priam that here you found Achilles, too"(9.742). And Turnus' recognition of the cost of glory is Achillean: "Let me barter death for fame"(12.49).

There is also, however, a strong resemblance to Hector in the character of Turnus. He, like Hector, attempts to burn the ships of the enemy. Likewise, he makes the mistake in battle of fighting for his own glory rather than allowing his nation to win. As Turnus has broken through the gates of the Trojan camp, he continues to fight for glory, thereby making a serious tactical error:

> The Trojans in terror turned and ran away.
> Turnus had won! If he had thought just then
> to break the bars and let his men march in,
> the war — and a nation, too — had that day ended.
> But folly and blood-lust drove him madly on
> against the enemy ranks. (9.756-61)

Turnus interprets the miracle of the ships turning into sea nymphs as he wishes it to be (9.123-34); Hector, as we recall, also interpreted a miracle as he wished it to be: "One bird sign is best: to fight in

defence of our country"(Iliad 12.243). In the case of Hector, Polydamas is the force of reason who suggests moderation and is threatened by the raging Hector. In the Aeneid, Drances is the reasonable foil to Turnus (11.378–82). As Turnus slowly comes to realize that his fated hour has come, he stands and addresses his sister:

> And now — the final blow! — to stand and see
> our homes destroyed, and not prove Drances wrong?
> Shall I turn tail — this land see Turnus run?
> Is it so bad to die? Ghosts of the dead,
> be kind to me, since heaven has turned away.
> I come to you a soul untainted, clear
> of the wrong done here; I shall not shame my fathers. (12.643–49)

The italicized line is almost a direct echo of Hector's last stand as he realizes that Polydamas was right. (Iliad 22.100). Turnus demonstrates the same patristic concern as did Hector: "I shall not shame my fathers." The final similes attributed to Turnus (i.e. the image of a frightened stag) are echoes of the prey-similes Homer gave to Hector. Finally, the same image of the warrior's life as the prize is offered:

> . . .this was no foolish game
> for prizes. Turnus' lifeblood was at stake. (12.764–65)

This image may be compared to that in the Iliad 22.160–61. Turnus does seem to be more of a Hector-type than an Achilles-type, but that is not the important point.[14] The heroic code by which both Hector and Achilles lived is now in its decline.

Turnus' final moments are tortured and febrile; he approaches the only conclusion his life can have, the logical — but destructive — conclusion of the heroic code by which he lives:

> Bewilderment of images struck the mind
> of Turnus; he stood and stared; vast waves of shame,
> madness, and sorrow surged up in his heart,

and love guilt-ridden, and courage that knew no doubt.(12.665–68)

Death, he proclaims, is the victor; and death, as we have seen, is the victor in the Homeric heroic code: it is the index, the crux, the ultimate element of a life lived heroically. Turnus wrenches one more fevered effort out of his heart and leaps to sure death:

> Death, sister, has won — yes, Death. Don't stop me now.
> I follow where God and heartless fortune call.
> I'll follow Aeneas, I'll bear the bitter pangs,
> I'll die. You'll never see me shamed again.
> Madness? Let me be mad this one last time! (12.676–80)

Turnus dies the fit death for the life he has lived; he, to quote Milton, "heroicly hath finish'd / A life Heroic"(SA 1710–11). To be a hero, Turnus must die "the death of honor on the field"(11.647). With Aeneas' spear, his "lance freighted with death"(12.924), Turnus' heroic fame is achieved.

Turnus may be portrayed ambiguously, that is as both a Hector-type and an Achilles-type, to show that the Homeric heroic code of mortality is surpassed, whether from the point of view of the defender, Hector, or the attacker, Achilles. Aeneas is Trojan like Hector, and he is an attacker like Achilles; and yet, his heroism is different from both. Before, though, we delineate Aeneas' heroic code, we may note the differences between him and Turnus. For Turnus, Lavinia is his lover, his physical bride. For Aeneas, Lavinia is the mother of Italy, the eponym of the shores of the land he must found. Lavinia is, as it were, transformed from a bride into a symbol of a bride. She becomes the third wife of Aeneas, the national bride of a national hero, and the dowry is the nation. We are never allowed to infer any sort of love between Aeneas and Lavinia; we are not even sure that they meet.

Turnus, like Dido, represents an egocentric code of heroic conduct. Glory achieved by death is the ultimate aim in his heroic life. Even at the cost of national victory, as we have seen, Turnus is compelled to glorious action. Aeneas, quite in juxtaposition, is the national hero, the hero who lives his life for the glory of his country; in this case, the founding of it.

IV

Aeneas, then, in juxtaposition to Turnus and Dido, reveals a heroic code which is not egocentric. The glorious code of the Iliad is not the vocation of Aeneas. His is a code of self-sacrifice, and it is a code with much pain involved. The pain is, moreover, two-fold: the pain of the future and the pain of the past.

Aeneas' odyssey to found Italy can be described only as being painful. "Dolor" occurs some forty times in the Aeneid. The poem is predominantly sad, and it is a sadness which is profound. Aeneas must hide his inner torment as he cheers his crew on the painful voyage:

> 'This isn't the first time, men, that we've known trouble!
> We've suffered worse, and God will end this, too!
> You sailed close by those cliffs where Scylla raged
> and roared; you saw the Cyclops and his home
> on Aetna. Take courage, now! No fears nor sorrow!
> Some day these memories, too, will bring a smile.
> Whatever may happen, whatever perils we face,
> it's on to Italy! Once there, we'll rest.
> So God reveals; there Troy must rise again.
> Hold hard and save yourselves for better days!' (1.198-207)

Aeneas suffers the pain of knowing his fate, of pursuing the design of destiny. This is the pain of the future, the pain of knowing the future. His knowledge, though, is no cause of relief; the knowledge of fate is not concomitant with a relaxed sense of responsibility. Rather,

this knowledge, perhaps all knowledge, is the cause of greater pain, greater fear. So, we may see that Aeneas is not comforted by his own assured statements to his men:

> These were his words, though he was sick with care.
> He forced a smile and kept his sorrows hidden. (1.208–09)

It does not seem to be an exaggeration to say that Aeneas suffers the passion of prophets, the pain of waiting for, of knowing, and of carrying out, God's will. It is the pain Milton demonstrates in the Son in his Paradise Regained: the pain of waiting for the fulness of time. This is basically the point T.S. Eliot makes when he calls Aeneas the "original Displaced Person," the pious man in the sea of evil, the fugitive of his obliterated society.[15] The pain of leading men into a promised land is the pain of the patriarchs, the pain of Abraham.[16] And all these pains are suffered by the servants of God, and by this title Aeneas is best described.

There is a theocentricity in the Aeneid which antedates Milton's conception of heroism, but which is a definite departure from Homer's. Achilles tries to defy the will of God when he wishes to live a life of anonymity. Many of the battles are fought without the supervision of the Olympian deities. If there is a sense of fate in the Homeric vision, it is a temperate one, one in which the glory that is man is not confined. There is room in Homer's poems for the heroic actions of heroic men, which is not to say there is no sense of fate. The epic form has always had the equipage of the deus ex machina. Achilles' fate, as we pointed out before, is not his to choose, although he believes it is. From Achilles' perspective, free-will is not overwhelming. Aeneas, though, is a subject of destiny. From the

perspective of the reader and, more importantly, from his own perspective, he is called by fate to a vocation he knows only too well.

In the final battle with Turnus, there are three instances in which the sense of fate with which Aeneas is blessed is made explicit. Aeneas has just been injured and he goes to Iapyx, the follower of the "mute inglorious art." The famed doctor works, but "in vain; in vain he worked"(12.403). Venus, then, descends with a stalk of dittany and dips it in the jug of water from which Iapyx is washing the wound. "Unwittingly," Iapyx washes the wound with this infusion and cures it: "occulte medicans"(12.418). Iapyx recognizes that destiny has cured Aeneas:

> No human power, no skill was teacher here;
> you were not saved, Aeneas, by hand of mine.
> A greater — a god — directs you to greater deeds! (12.427-29)

The second instance is in the strategical plans Aeneas carries out. Aeneas is trying to flush Turnus out of the fray, when suddenly Venus sends him the idea of marching straight to the city walls. The idea is quite in opposition to the means Aeneas had been pursuing: "At once a bolder stratagem stirred his mind"(12.560). The third instance is in the final battle itself. Aeneas' spear has penetrated a tree, a tree the Trojans have cleared without thought of its holy significance; and remains imprisoned by the tree's tough roots. Aeneas strains to release his spear, "but all his effort could not break the clench / of oak-hard wood"(12.782-83). Finally, enraged at Juturna's support of Turnus, Venus wrenches the spear free for the hero. The three episodes are indicative of Aeneas' calling, his heaven-sent mission.

With this vocation comes a new heroic code, a code different from any previous. Aeneas, as we have seen, is juxtaposed with Dido and Turnus in his heroic conduct. His has been a heroism of concerns nationalistic, not egocentric. He cannot, like Dido, die in a fit of glory; he must live. He cannot, like Turnus, rage madly in the bloody battle to gain his lovely bride; he must be composed and gain a symbolic bride of Italy. Aeneas' heroism is, ultimately, a heroism of piety, the adjective used to describe him nineteen times in the poem: "pius." Pietas, though, does not mean simple "piety"; it implies an attitude of punctilious observance of the rites to the gods, of obedience to the will of the gods, of agency in the service of the gods.[17] Piety, though, does not constitute heroism in the Aeneid; there is still required divine sanction, vocation. Rhipeus was the justest man that lived in Troy, and "yet heaven forsook him"(2.428). Panthus, Aeneas relates, was profoundly pious; yet, "not all your piety, / Panthus, could save you"(2.429). Piety, despite these two cases, is the hallmark of the Aeneid. As Helenus says to Anchises, the father and subject of Aeneas' piety: "o felix nati pietate," "blessed in the goodness of your son"(3.480). Vocation, in the case of Aeneas, the ultimate hero of Troy and the original hero of Italy, is the antecedent premise which is fulfilled through pietas.

This heroic code of Virgil requires piety, but it also constitutes a degree of pain. Dolor, as we have noted, is one of the key words in the poem; one critic suggests that it is the key word.[18] Certainly, the Virgilian heroic code, as exemplified by Aeneas, is punctuated by pain. It is a torment, not unlike Odysseus', the affliction of the floundering hero. But it is also more. It is the pain of self-restraint, of

fighting his natural urges, the urge to love, to fight, to die. Aeneas' is a heroism of suffering and a great part of the suffering is fighting the urge to return to the old heroic code. This is the pain of the past, the pain of not being able to return to the past. He is a hero because he can transcend the heroic code of egocentricity. It is painful because it is the only heroic code he knows. The Aeneid is, then, an education in a new heroic attitude.

Aeneas has had to resist lapsing into codes of behavior which were acceptable in his previous actions. He suffers the anguish of desiring death in the storm which ravages him but will not allow him to die. He calls out to a heaven that has given him this hard task, the chore of living:

> The heavens thundered; lightning crackled and flashed;
> wherever men looked they saw the face of death.
> A chill swept over Aeneas; his limbs went weak;
> he moaned in terror and stretched his hands towards heaven,
> calling aloud: 'Oh, three times, four times blessed,
> those men who died beneath the walls of Troy,
> watched by their fathers! Oh Diomede, you bravest
> of Greeks, why could you not have spilled my life
> on Trojan soil? Why could I not have fallen
> where Achilles laid Hector low, where tall Sarpedon
> lies; where Simois rolls beneath his waves
> the helmets, the shields of heroes, and those brave dead!'
> (1.89–101)

The code of heroism which Achilles, Hector, Sarpedon exhibited is the code he knows, and that code rests on mortality. This is a new pain to which Aeneas is subjected: the pain of living, the pain of loss. Aeneas cannot grasp the glory of the past, as he cannot grasp the ghosts of his wife and father. They slip away as the wisp of a dream; he is left to suffer life. Aeneas, though, in his suffering, and it is great, founds a country and a new heroic code, of which part is passionate suffering.

Just as he cannot hug his first wife and his father, symbols of his past, he must hug the only bride given him, his destiny: the future is all. Every bond Aeneas has, save one, is broken by the end of the poem. He loses Creusa, Dido, Anchises, Pallas, Troy, all the symbols of the past; the only bond still intact at the end is with his son, the only bond which promises posterity. Virgil does not allow us to forget that the Aeneid is a poem about extinction as well as origin: "Troy died: let 'Troy' and 'Trojan' rest in peace"(12.828). Aeneas must watch as all he loves dies. This is the cost of vocation: "si te fata vocant"(6.147).

V

Aeneas, we have suggested, develops a new code of heroism. As a character, moreover, he himself develops within the poem. In his relation of the fall of Troy, he had portrayed himself as a Homeric hero in the extreme. The old heroic order of anger possesses him:

> . . .a senseless rage
> propelled me: 'Glory!' I thought. 'To die in battle!' (2.316-17)

This is the Trojan Aeneas who, like Turnus, would barter death for fame. But Troy falls and Aeneas departs. The end of the second book reveals Aeneas, having lost Creusa, carrying Anchises off in the horizon: "Bearing my father, I started toward the hills"(2.804). The symbolism suggests the hero bearing the burden of the past towards the vision of the future. Anchises is part of the old heroic order and, as such, he is a burden from whom Aeneas is doomed to be separated.

Aeneas develops through his trials. He suffers lapses, but they are the expected lapses that occur in a new education. He must fight the temptation to found a new Troy. When he tries to establish a new

Troy, destiny pushes him on: "Fate frowned on my attempt"(3.17). Part of the temptation is to escape the fated time and place, the two dimensions which constitute destiny. He confounds the two Cretes, and believes himself established on the place of destiny. The travellers settle, and are rewarded with a short period of fecundity. It is followed, however, by a plague (3.135–42). There are a surprising number of new and smaller Troys in the Mediterranean. Chaonia is referred to as a "parvam Troiam"(3.349). Acesta is called the "new Troy." Troy, to Aeneas' mission, represents the return to an old order, an old heroic code. It is the temptation to forego discovery for regression, the temptation to modify the place of destiny. The temptation to anticipate the proper time and place is seen in Iris' guileful offer:

> 'hic quaerite Troiam;
> hic domus est' inquit 'vobis.' iam tempus agi res.'
>
> 'Search here for Troy;
> here,' she said, 'is your home!' Now is the hour! (5.638–39)

This is a temptation to an old order at an improper time. Aeneas' mission is not to found Troy, but to discover Italy; likewise, his heroic code cannot be Trojan, but must be of the new Italian type. And it is yet to be. Aeneas shows his development in his ability to overcome this and other temptations. He has grown from that egocentric hero of the second book. By the sixth book, most critics agree, Aeneas is fully matured.[19] He has attained that all-important ability to transcend his own ambitions and to aim at the achievement of the new nation. His heroism is comprised of that ability to transcend self, to put the country before the individual. And it is a heroism which is,

basically, constructive. Dido and Turnus achieve glory through destruction. Aeneas must suffer losses, but his ultimate end is constructive, not unlike the metaphor we have suggested for the poem as a whole, the labour of birth: "Such matter it was to found our Roman race"(1.33).

VI

Aeneas, then, is the father of Italy and a new heroic code; both have been achieved through trial and pain. This new heroic code is, for our study, a significant departure from the Homeric code. Aeneas, T.S. Eliot suggests, is "the prototype of a Christian hero." [20] He does, in some aspects, anticipate the heroic code of Dante, Milton, and Spenser. His piety is rewarded with eternal life; he becomes a theios aner, a man destined to divinity. As Jove says to Venus:

> No fear, Cytherea! Your people's fate remains
> unchanged. You'll see the city and promised walls
> of Lavinium; you shall carry to heaven's high stars
> Aeneas the great and good. . .(1.257-60)

The epithet Jove gives Aeneas is "magnanimum," an epithet the Renaissance was to make Aeneas' distinguishing mark. [21] The promise is reiterated in the final book (12.794-95). The kingdom Aeneas founds is perpetual; it is, says Jove, "sine fine"(1.279). There is, moreover, a reliance on the law of God ("iussa deum" 6.461) as opposed to a self-willed heroism. The hero who follows his own will does not achieve any glory because he follows the will of anti-Fate, the will of Juno (7.293-94). [22]

One other similarity between Virgil's art and that of Milton and Spenser is the use of metaphors to suggest an implicit universality.

The hero is not, like Achilles, the only example of heroic conduct. Aeneas is the "Augustan hero," the hero every Roman should emulate. In the art of Spenser and Milton, we will see that same metaphoric pragmatism.

One of the symbols Jove sends Aeneas is at the crux of the crucial second book. It is, in a manner, the turning-point of the poem, and the initial call to a new heroic code. Aeneas is raging and preparing to make his way to a battle which promises sure death. He is deaf to the pleas of his father and his wife; a hero of the Homeric code must be deaf to domestic detentions. As Aeneas prepares to leave, Jove sends a miracle; light glimmers on Ascanius' head. Anchises reveals the prophecy associated with this miracle: a new land must be born. The heroic code which was fulfilled through death is now surpassed. Aeneas must live and found Italy. And, as we have mentioned, it is a burden. He bears his father out of Troy to the future. He, likewise, bears the future. Such is the difference between Achilles' shield and Aeneas'. Aeneas' shield is the portrayal of Roman history till Augustus. Aeneas, though, is the agent of conveyance: "Aeneas / saw only art, not history"(8.729-30). And yet, history rests, literally and metaphorically, on his shoulders. He must carry out the divine will of founding Italy. The cost of failure is the infamy of Marcellus: "If you should break the bars of fate, / you'll be Marcellus"(6.882-83). And, with the established order of heaven and hell that the Aeneid demonstrates, it is a fate most deplorable.

To accomplish this fate, Aeneas, as we have seen, must reject his natural urges, most notably the natural urge to regress to the old heroic code of the Trojan War. But Troy represents war; Italy peace.

The codes of heroic conduct are as diverse as the vocations. As a metaphor of our study, we suggest the scene in which Aeneas inspects the painting on the walls of the temple Dido is building for Juno:

> As he surveyed the temple, stone by stone,
> awaiting the queen, and wondering how this town
> had come to be, amazed at the workmen's zeal
> and skill, he saw, scene after scene, the war
> at Troy, battles now famed through all the world:
> the Atrides, Priam, and, savage to both, Achilles.
> His tears welled up. 'What place, Achates, now,'
> he said, 'what land does not know all we suffered?
> See: Priam! Here too the brave have their reward!
> The world has tears; man's lot does touch the heart.
> Put off your fears: our story will save us yet!'
> Aeneas spoke, and let this empty show
> nourish his grief and flood his face with tears. (1.453-65)

The wall painting is an "empty show" ("pictura inani"), but it affects Aeneas. The same may be said of the heroic code to which he gives birth; the code is affected by the Trojan war and its concomitant heroism, but in light of the future, the former code becomes an empty heroic code. The artistry of the wall will give way to the artisty of the shield. Virgil does propose a new heroic code, but it is not a rejection of the Homeric code. It is a tempering of the Homeric code and a refining of the ends of that code. Just as the kingdom Jove promised to Aeneas is not "sine fine," so the heroic code Virgil proposes is not perpetual. This code was necessary for the nascent Italy, but it will wane. The refining of the Virgilian code, with the rejection of the Homeric code, is left for the next renaissance.

Chapter Three

"Reason Also Is Choice": Heroism in Paradise Lost

> Three Poets, in three distant ages born,
> Greece, Italy, and England, did adorn.
> The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd;
> The next in majesty; in both the last.[1]

In the invocation in the ninth book of Paradise Lost, Milton declares that the heroism of which he sings is a new type of heroism, heroism he proudly refers to as

> . . .the better fortitude
> Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom
> Unsung. . .(9.31-33)

It remains unsung, he reminds us, because "hitherto the only Argument / Heroic deem'd" has been that of war and "fabl'd Knights / In Battles feign'd." Milton invokes his "Celestial Patroness" at a key point in the action. The "Subject for Heroic Song" is about to be acted out; it is a subject deemed heroic neither by Milton's contemporaries, judging by his insistence on its heroic value, nor by modern critics who claim a breach of theme (heroism) and subject (the Fall).[2] But, as we have seen, Milton insists on the heroic value of his subject; indeed, of its super-heroic value. Our study, then, must needs concern itself with the type of heroism Milton envisioned, a heroism we conveniently refer to as Miltonic heroism. Nominally, however, the term is meaningless unless one examines the code of heroic conduct Milton espoused. Such an examination will be followed by an explication of the heroic code of Paradise Lost. This heroic code is a point of contention, as we shall

see, because of the character of Satan. How Milton portrays Satan is a key aspect of the heroic code of the poem. Finally, we approach Paradise Lost as a work of art with explicitly pragmatic concerns; through a study of its humanitarian basis we will discover the hero of the poem.

I

As a descriptive term, "Miltonic heroism" is at best ambiguous. To examine the ethos of the heroic code Milton gloried in, to discover the ultimate end of such heroic conduct, to locate the medium in which such heroism is best displayed, is to define the ambiguous term. Ultimately, the term which best describes the heroic code Milton envisaged is "metaphysical heroism," a heroism which does not depend on the prowess of arms or carnal strength; rather, it is a heroism of spiritual fortitude, a heroism most eloquently stated by the twentieth-century German novelist, Thomas Mann:

> The conception of an intellectual and virginal manliness, which clenches its teeth and stands in modest defiance of the swords and spears that pierce its side. That was beautiful, it was spirituel, it was exact, despite the suggestion of too great passivity it held. Forbearance in the fact of fate, beauty constant under torture, are not merely passive. They are a positive achievement, an explicit triumph. . . [3]

Milton's ideal heroism, of course, differs somewhat from Mann's; Milton held a stronger belief in free-will, for example. Nonetheless, it is a portrait of the patient hero, the passionately suffering hero.

The ethos of this type of heroism is, naturally, the soul of man. The medium of Homeric heroism, we have seen, is the battlefield. It is where the hero becomes a hero; death, the inevitable consummation of battle, is the measure of the hero. Milton saw a heroism above this

physical plane, a heroism comprised of spiritual and mental fortitude in a battle for more than a mortal life, but for the immortal soul. Trial is the medium for this heroic encounter, the trial, perpetually engaged in on all fronts, of good against evil. One of the most important statements on the importance of trial is the oft-quoted passage (oft-quoted, of course, because of its eloquence and its truth) from Areopagitica:

> Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned. . . And perhaps this is the doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say, of knowing good by evil.[4]

Milton is careful to make the point that his concern is with the world as "the state of man now is." Pre-lapsarian man, the subject of his poetic masterpiece, is a different matter altogether, as we shall see. But in the post-lapsarian world a "true warfaring Christian" goes into the battle with evil and emerges victorious. And, as a Homeric hero cannot be a hero without joining the sanguinary battles on the plains of Ilium, so a warfaring Christian cannot be a hero without participating in the mental battle with evil.

> I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary.[5]

So, Milton asseverates that Spenser is the best of teachers because he takes the reader into the cave of Mammon and the bower of earthly bliss, "that he might see and know, and yet abstain." As we will see later,

Milton follows the lead of the "sage and serious poet" in this and other poetic and theological practices.

Trial, however, is the basic medium, the battlefield if you will, of spiritual heroism: a trial of good exposing itself to the wiles of evil. Nor is this exposure to be superficial; one must know, and yet abstain; any other heroic conduct is but "excremental." The trial is essentially one of suffering, standing up erect in a cave too low. The image which runs throughout Paradise Lost is that of the erect spirit who refuses to bow to the yoke of servile obedience. The phrase is Satan's, and we are here quoting the devil for our purposes. Obedience is not servile if properly directed. Abdiel, the angel who displays an unequalled zeal and obedience towards the Deity, rises amongst the counsel of falling angels (they are plotting their own lapse) and asserts the role of obedience in this address to Satan:

> Shalt thou give Law to God, shalt thou dispute
> With him the points of liberty, who made
> Thee what thou art, and form'd the Pow'rs of Heav'n
> Such as he pleas'd, and circumscrib'd thir being? (5.822-25)

Significantly, Abdiel "Stood up" to deliver this admonition., Soon enough, Satan and his assemblage of angels "fall" for nine days into the yawning abyss of Hell.

The point Abdiel makes is crucial to an understanding of the concept of Miltonic heroism. God is the creator of man and angels, and, as His creatures, they owe obedience to their creator. This essential theocentricity colours Milton's vision of heroism. God is the center of all activity; it begins with Him and it returns to Him. This theocentricity is contrasted with utter egocentricity, the belief in self-motivated activity Satan professes. Satan must, as we shall see,

demonstrate a certain childish sophistry to claim his seeming independence. And it is seeming because in reality (and there is always in the poem a tension between the real and the falsely visible) the devil does not and cannot act without God's sanction. He cannot even rise from the burning lake without God's leave (1.210–20). Such is the liberty of the devil. And the sophistry to which he resorts in order to assert his independence smacks of the argument a toddler might use to assert his freedom over his parents:

> That we were form'd then say'st thou? and the work
> Of secondary hands, by task transferr'd
> From Father to his Son? strange point and new!
> Doctrine which we would know whence learnt: who saw
> When this creation was? remember'st thou
> Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
> We know no time when we were not as now;
> Know none before us, self-begot, self-rais'd
> By our own quick'ning power. . .(5.853–60, my emphasis)

Satan's egocentricity, as we shall see, is the foundation of his heroic code. It is, further, a heroic code which is juxtaposed with the Son's theocentric code, a heroic love and obedience towards God.

Milton's theocentric vision of heroism is essential to Paradise Lost, just as it is essential to all his heroic poetry. Carnal strength is useless without God's command. Michael, as he faces Satan in the War in Heaven, claims that his strength is not his own, but that of his creator; his "avenging Sword" is wielded by the angel but "wing'd from God"(6.279). Abdiel claims that he means to fight Satan, but he does not resemble the warrior glorying in his own strength; rather, Abdiel enters the fight "trusting in th' Almighty aid"(6.119). It is enough now to recognize the theocentricity of Milton's heroic code; later we will deal with its implications in Paradise Lost.

Milton may owe a debt to Spenser for the concept of theocentric heroism. As the Red Knight prepares to enter the "house of Holinesse," the poet interjects this brief paean to the efficacy of God's grace into the narrative:

> What man is he, that boasts of fleshly might,
> And vaine assurance of mortality,
> Which all so soone, as it doth come to fight,
> Against spirituall foes, yeelds by and by,
> Or from the fielde most cowardly doth fly?
> Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
> That thorough grace hath gained victory.
> If any strength we have, it is to ill,
> But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will.[6]

In Milton, too, all good is God's.

The ethos of Miltonic heroism, then, is that of the internal, the holy, war. The trial of goodness exposed to evil in the soul of man is the trial of the "better fortitude." The emphasis on the interior battle of the soul is marked in the poem. Satan recognizes that whither he flies the torturing pain of hell flies with him: "Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell"(4.75). Michael tells Adam that obedience to, and love for, God will enable Adam to possess a "paradise within . . .happier far"(12.587). Satan's pithy statement that "The mind is its own place"(1.254) is true to a degree. Hell, it must be remembered, cannot become a Heaven. The mind, though, is the locale of much action: the psychomachia of the eternal, internal, warfare of good and evil.

II

As we have noted, Milton's invocation in the ninth book of Paradise Lost is conspicuous because of its insistence on the heroic subject which follows it. The Fall of Adam and Eve is not particularly heroic at first glance. And yet, this is the subject of Milton's heroic epic;

indeed, he insists on its genre. He refers to it as a "Heroic Poem" in the prefatory apology for "The Verse"; and he reiterates that he chose "this Subject" for "Heroic Song"(9.25). Modern critics have suggested a disparity between the subject and the heroic theme. Professor Hagin states the case: "he [Milton] chose a basically unheroic theme because he knew that a heroic one would fail him."[7] Professor Tillyard goes further and suggests that Milton could not contain his Satan, and that the subject for Milton's best narrative was the one he rejected:

> In sum it is Satan who in Paradise Lost best expresses that heroic energy of Milton's mind, best hitherto expressed in Areopagitica, which undoubtedly, though in very different form, would have been the master emotion of the projected Arthuriad.[8]

Tillyard's assessment of Milton's concept of heroism is based on the code of trial Areopagitica espouses. It is, though, a faulty assessment based on a faulty understanding of the prose treatise. As we noted, Areopagitica emphasizes its concern with man's present condition, that is, fallen. Milton's mind was not of the sort to accept that man's condition was always as it is now. We must rather agree with Dr. Johnson in his praise of Milton's mental capacities:

> The heat of Milton's mind might be said to sublimate his learning, to throw off into his work the spirit of science, unmingled with its grosser parts.[9]

Addison also claims that Milton's distinguishing excellence is "the Sublimity of his Thoughts."[10] The chief feature of Milton's sublimity of thought is, we suggest, his ability to delve into the origin of a problem. He did, it will be recalled, write a treatise on logic. Milton's mind could distinguish between the mediate and the immediate cause of a thing — a gift we must note in order to recognize the

speciousness of much of Satan's sophistry, sophistry which relies on the base of mediate causes. Milton, then, made no mistake when he rejected his projected Arthuriad; if he had begun to write it, we speculate, he would have been led to account for Arthur's or Lancelot's actions; and ultimately, we speculate ever more, he would have written of the fall of man. Such speculation, happily, is fruitless because Milton did write of the Fall, and he chose to write of it in the genre of a heroic poem.

The choice of the heroic poem is not a mistake in any way. Milton chose his generic medium with due attention; and he expected his poem to be compared to those of Homer and Virgil. In the same prefatory apology for "The Verse," Milton refers to Virgil and Homer. And, again, in the invocation in the ninth book of the poem he outlines the subjects of the three greatest poems of the pre-Christian era. And, by referring to these poems, Milton explicitly juxtaposes his heroic code with theirs. As the poet turns his attention to the major action of his fable, changing "Those notes to Tragic," he claims that his subject is a

> Sad task, yet argument
> Not less but more Heroic than the wrath
> Of stern Achilles on his Foe pursu'd
> Thrice Fugitive about Troy Wall; or rage
> Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous'd,
> Or Neptune's ire or Juno's, that so long
> Perplexed the Greek and Cytherea's Son. . .(9.13–19)

Milton distinctly refers to the three major epics of the classical period: the Aeneid, the Iliad, and the Odyssey. The point of interest in each of the epics is its destructive emotion: the wrath of Achilles, the rage of Turnus, and the ire of Neptune and Juno. Heroic song, Milton understood, required strong emotions, usually displaying themselves in destructive urges. These emotions, moreover, were

demonstrated by both the human actors and the gods. Milton offers his own heroic emotion, love; and, he offers its ultimate realization, creation. The God of Paradise Lost is, ultimately, merciful; He is a far cry from Juno or Neptune. The wrath of Achilles can find no place in a song of patience and martyrdom. His wrath was the cause of pain and death and destruction; the Son shows divine love, towards man and God, and manifests his emotion in the Creation.

Milton, as Addison notes, chose the original fable of Adam and Eve for its profundity.[11] This is a story not of one man, or even of one nation; it is the story of a species. Once again, we can see Milton's concern with the immediate. It is an important point to remember for those who wish to consider the hero of Paradise Lost.

III

Satan, Shelley claims, is the hero of Paradise Lost; he is, he maintains, a superior moral being to Milton's God. It is interesting to note that these remarks are made in an essay entitled "On the Devil, and Devils." Shelley insists that Satan contains the grandeur and the energy of an epic hero.[12] Even the more religiously orthodox John Dryden implies that Satan is the hero of Paradise Lost.[13] The critical commentary is exhaustive, hence the point must be dealt with.[14]

Satan, we have suggested, represents the egocentric hero; indeed, even to the point of his own creation: "self-begot, self-rais'd." His heroism, though, serves as a parodic foil for the "better fortitude" of the theocentric hero. Satan represents the contrary force, the desperate force of evil; desperate because evil is but the seed of good. When Satan cries out defiantly,

To do aught good never will be our task
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his Providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil. . .(1.159-65)

he betrays a conscious despair which wearies the mind. To imagine being evil forever, ever being foiled by good, ever having faint consolation in acts of destruction which but lead to acts of construction contrary to one's will, is dizzying. Even this statement of rebellion is but the parody of Adam's cry of joy at the felix culpa conclusion to Michael's narrative of the Second Coming (12.469-78). Evil will inevitably lead to good; hence the fallen angels' desperate situation. Each act of theirs, then, is a futile gesture. Action, that is action against God's will, is a "pseudo-activity."[15] True action is love and obedience towards God; and only activity with His approbation is meaningful.

Satan, moreover, thrives for glory, the glory that characterized the Homeric hero. When he is captured at Eve's ear in the fourth book, Satan is disappointed that he is not recognized:

Know ye not then said Satan, fill'd with scorn,
Know ye not mee? ye knew me once no mate
For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar;
Not to know mee argues yourselves unknown. . .(4.827-30)

Despite his sadness at feeling how "awful goodness is," Satan's chief concern is with his diminished lustre (4.850). The difference in perspective between Satan and the good angels is seen in the differing views of war. Satan addresses Michael

. . .err not that so shall end
The strife which thou call'st evil, but wee style
The strife of Glory: which we mean to win. . .(6.288-90)

War, an act of destruction, is an evil to the good angels, a chance for glory to Satan. This is the call of the Homeric heroic code, and it is in decline in Satan's mouth. In battle with Michael and Abdiel, Satan is shown to be a rather poor warrior. Thinking himself God's equal, he discovers he cannot even cope with God's servants:

> Gnashing for anguish and despite and shame
> To find himself not matchless, and his pride
> Humbl'd by such rebuke, so far beneath
> His confidence to equal God in power. (6.340–43)

Satan, as a warrior, presents a rather unheroic figure.

But Satan's glory is not to be denied him. Upon discovering his inability to wage war against heaven, he decides to destroy by guile what he could not by force. Once again, he is determined to achieve the glory of conquest:

> To mee shall be the glory sole among
> Th' infernal Powers, in one day to have marr'd
> What he Almighty styl'd, six Nights and Days
> Continu'd making. . .(9.135–38)

Such is Satan's thirst for glory, for fame; and such is his means of achieving it, destruction: "For only in destroying I find ease / To my relentless thoughts. . ."(9.129–30).

In juxtaposition, now, we may see the Son as the epitome of theocentricity. The Son is the paradigm of heroic martyrdom and love. Having taken on the task of undergoing mortality to free man, the Son receives this praise from God: "Love hath abounded more than Glory abounds"(3.312). Glory is never a concern for the hero whose major objective is obeying and loving God. Fame, earthly fame, is not what he strives for; rather, heavenly fame, acceptance in the sight of God, is his reward. The supreme, one may say the divine, irony of Satan's

desire for glory is the silence with which he is rewarded. As Raphael recounts to Adam:

> I might relate of thousands, and thir names
> Eternize here on Earth; but those elect
> Angels contented with thir fame in Heav'n
> Seek not the praise of men; the other sort
> In might though wondrous and in Acts of War,
> Nor of Renown less eager, yet by doom
> Cancell'd from Heav'n and sacred memory,
> Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell.
> For strength from Truth divided and from Just,
> Illaudable, naught merits but dispraise
> And ignominy, yet to glory aspires
> Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
> Therefore Eternal silence be thir doom. (6.373-85)

So is Satan's thirst for glory quenched: with "dark oblivion."

Satan's independence (once again, only seeming independence) is juxtaposed with the Son's total dependence on God. The Messiah is "Mightiest in [his] Father's might"(6.710) and he is armed in God's armory. The Son, then, is ascribed with God's might and arms for the war in heaven. The act of the Creation, the positive counterpart to the heavenly battle, is also undertaken with God's support. As the Son undertakes the Creation, the glory of his Father shines on him (7.196). And once again, he is equipped from the "Armory of God"(7.200) as he ascends "in Parental Glory"(7.219). It is in this utter dependence on God that true glory is acheived. The Son declares:

> O Father, O Supreme of heav'nly Thrones,
> First, Highest, Holiest, Best, thou always seek'st
> To glorify thy Son, I always thee,
> As is most just; this I my Glory account,
> My exaltation, and my whole delight,
> That thou in me well pleas'd, declar'st thy will
> Fulfill'd, which to fulfill is all my bliss. (6.723-29)

Thus, false glory and false independence, that is, egocentricity, are shown in their true light in juxtaposition with true glory and true

theocentricity. As the Son says, "to obey is happiness entire"(7.741); and, from the figure of the Son, happiness shines forth.

Obedience, the positive aspect of the subject of the poem, disobedience, is concomitant with happiness. Pain is the inevitable result of disobedience. In the heavenly war, the fallen angels feel the first pangs of pain because of their "sin of disobedience"; the good angels feel no pain:

> Far otherwise th' inviolable Saints
> In Cubic Phalanx firm advanc'd entire,
> Invulnerable, impenetrably arm'd:
> Such high advantages thir innocence
> Gave them above thir foes, not to have sinn'd,
> Not to have disobey'd. . .(6.398–403)

Once again, we can see the emphasis on the inner warfare; disobedience, the interior battle lost, affects pain, the exterior battle lost.

Satan's egocentricity and desire for sole glory are relics of a heroic code seen as heroic only in wicked times. Michael, in his pictorially-presented history of the world, speaks of these "heroes" thus:

> Such were these Giants, men of high renown;
> For in those days Might only shall be admir'd,
> And Valor and Heroic Virtue call'd;
> To overcome in Battle, and subdue
> Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
> Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
> Of human Glory, and for Glory done
> Of triumph, to be styl'd great Conquerors,
> Patrons of Mankind, Gods, and Sons of Gods,
> Destroyers rightlier call'd and Plagues of men.
> Thus Fame shall be achiev'd, renown on Earth,
> And what most merits fame in silence hid. (11.689–99)

This theme is constant in Milton. Self-described as "Not sedulous by Nature to indite / Wars"(9.27–28), Milton disparaged warfare in all his poetry and prose. What the Son says of warfare in Paradise Regained

probably bespeaks Milton's own attitude (PR 3.71-87). As we have seen, to the good angels it is a necessary evil, to the bad a chance for glory.

The essential element of battle, simply stated, is, of course, its destructive nature. Satan encapsulates that destructive attitude; his sole joy lies in breeding death, literally and metaphorically. There is a grotesque comedy of familial relations between Satan and his offspring (through the confusing maze of incest, Death is finally Satan's own child). When the progenitor of Death and Death play, what, one wonders would be their game? Comically enough, it would be death; and, so it turns out that Satan's initial response to his son is to kill him, just as the son's feeling is mutual towards his father:

> Each at the Head
> Levell'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands
> No second stroke intend. . .(2.711-13)

Their intentions are prevented by the interfering wife-mother-wife, Sin, who admonishes her husband not to play so strenuously with his son and vice versa:

> O Father, what intends thy hand, she cri'd,
> Against thy only Son? What fury O Son,
> Possesses thee to bend that mortal Dart
> Against thy Father's head? (2.727-30)

And, metaphorically, Satan paves the way for Death's entrance into the world; literally, Death then paves his own way.

This destructive element in Satan, especially with the emphasis on his paternal relationship with Death, is the Homeric heroic stance taken to its irreducible core: mortality. Of course, Homer's heroes are not evil to the extent of Satan, but Milton's concern was not with Achilles

or Odysseus per se; rather, Milton saw that having mortality as the crux of heroic conduct was pernicious. To create, Milton argued, is "greater than created to destroy"(7.607), and in that dictum is the basic difference between the Son and Satan. Satan, because of his hatred for God, wishes to destroy His works (which desire, ultimately, is foiled); the Son, because of his love for God, wishes to create and save His works (which desire, ultimately, is achieved). In heaven, and we must remember that heaven is the measure of true fame, the Son is the hero. He is glorified, and he is glorified in relation to God. As the Heavenly Choir sings:

> Hail Son of God, Savior of Men, thy Name
> Shall be the copious matter of my Song
> Henceforth, and never shall my Harp thy praise
> Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin. (3.412-15, my emphasis)

The Son's "unexampl'd love," his desire to glorify God, his wish to create, his obedience (a concomitant effect of love for God), make him the heroic archetype of the "better fortitude." He is that patient martyr of whom the invocation in the ninth book makes glorious mention. Satan, in this heroic code, is the anti-heroic archetype.[16] His activity is negative, and, finally, acts as the basis of the Son's positive redemption: "his evil / Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good"(7.615-16). His egocentricity is evil in the disobedience it prompts; and obedience to a lower power is essentially the subjection of self to the "servile yoke"; and obedience to self is definitely, in Milton's divine plan, a disobedience to the highest possible force, God.

Thus the heroic archetypes are presented. Satan, if his heroic energy does appeal, is appealing, Milton maintains, because we live in

fallen times in which heroes of might, destroyers rightlier called, are the heroic norm. In a reading, then, based on the classical heroic code of Homer, Satan is the hero; but, as Professor Widmer astutely points out, "Satan may be the hero, but the hero in a poetic commitment which rejects heroism for submission to transcendental authority."[17] And Milton wished to alter even the semantics. A better heroism, a higher heroic argument, a truer heroic achievement, are the superlatives Milton ascribes to the patient martyrs who obey and love God; and their fame is heavenly: what most merits fame is in silence hid on Earth, but sung loudly in Heaven. And, heaven the spiritual goal of man, is the measure:

> From shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit,
> From imposition of strict Laws to free
> Acceptance of large Grace, from servile fear
> To filial, works of Law to works of Faith. (12.303-06)

The move from carnal to essential is the move from earthly to heavenly; and it is motion this poem strenuously advocates.

IV

So far, we have referred to the Son as the heroic archetype, not specifically the hero, of Paradise Lost. In "The Passion," a poem of Milton's youth, Milton calls the Son the

> Most perfect Hero, tried in heaviest plight
> Of labors huge and hard, too hard for human wight.[18]

Milton's conception of the Son did not change significantly from this early poem to the time of the composition of Paradise Lost. The Son remained the paradigm of heroic virtue to be emulated. Even in this early poem, however, we can see Milton's reluctance to associate the Son

with "mere" heroism; his was a heroism of perfection, of labors above Herculean, above human pretensions. Rather, the Son represents the type of heroic virtue to which mortals must aspire: he is the archetypal hero. Nor is he the hero, in the mortal sense of the word, of Paradise Lost. The hero of the poem must be on the human stage; the subject of this epic poem is, after all,

> Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit
> Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat. . . (1.1-5)

True enough, the vision of the invocation is cosmic, looking before and after, as it were, from the losing of, to the regaining of, paradise. But the basic feature is paradise, and its occupants two.

Why, then, does Milton give so much poetry to establishing the cosmic sphere of his basically human universe? The reason lies in the humans. The subject of the poem being the fall of man, Milton delivered the forces of the universe that could influence Adam to lapse or not to lapse; he drew the portraits, and with exquisite artistry, of good and evil: the Son and Satan. The cosmic background is essential to the human foreground. Professor Frye has compared Paradise Lost to a symphony with a perfect diapason, with the rich harmonious background music always within earshot of the melodious foreground music.[19] We would agree with this inter-medium explanation of the poem and offer another; there is a background always in the picture of Eden, as if the golden chain were a pictorial link with heaven. Hell, we know, will develop its own pathway, later. A comparison, we feel, can be made between Rembrandt's paintings and Paradise Lost. Both maintain the

feeling of background influencing, or influenced by, foreground. Does not, after all, the Earth groan twice within the poem? Do not these rumblings audibly remind us of the overwhelming effect of the fall? In essence, Milton is able to impose a larger, implicit, background onto the scene of the pair in Eden.[20] When Eve and Adam fall, they are not alone; God and the Son have been looking on all the while, and Satan has been in the garden. The forces of the cosmic universe are in the background of the human universe, always.

This cosmology we offer of a heavenly superstructure and a hellish substructure is basic to the poem's evaluation of heroism. Adam is educated, true enough, and in his education he is shown the two possible heroic codes. Having portrayed the heroics of Satan in his narrative of the war in heaven, Raphael advises Adam:

> . . let it profit thee to have heard
> By terrible Example the reward
> Of disobedience; firm they might have stood,
> Yet fell; remember, and fear to transgress. (6.909–12)

The "terrible Example" is followed by a relation of the Creation. Adam knows the two heroic codes, the destructive and egocentric, the creative and theocentric. It is his to choose the path he will follow. The archetypes have been presented; this is the education of Adam. As Raphael takes his leave with the setting sun, he admonishes Adam:

> Be strong, live happy, and love, but first of all
> Him whom to love is to obey, and keep
> His great command; take heed lest Passion sway
> Thy Judgment to do aught, which else free Will
> Would not admit; thine and of all thy Sons
> The weal or woe in thee is plac't; beware. (8.633–38)

The weal or woe that is placed in Adam is, of course, the potential he is given "to stand or fall"; but, with the knowledge he now has, it also

implies his education apropos the nature of good or evil, the choice he can make between the heroics of heaven or of hell.

To suggest that man is the axis between the supernal and the infernal is not to exceed the limits of sober probability. The poem is concerned with "Man's First Disobedience," and it does, within the very invocation, look forward to the redemption of that disobedience. Indeed, within the framework of the epic, the Redemption will be revealed to Adam in the audible portion of the history of the world. And, more importantly, the image of redemption is intricately associated with the defeat of Satan. As Michael relates to Adam:

> Dream not of thir fight,
> As of a Duel, or the local wounds
> Of head or heel: not therefore joins the Son
> Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
> Thy enemy; nor so is overcome
> Satan, whose fall from Heav'n, a deadlier bruise,
> Disabl'd not to give thee thy death's wound:
> Which hee, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
> Not by destroying Satan, but his works
> In thee and in thy Seed: nor can this be,
> But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
> Obedience to the Law of God, impos'd
> On penalty of death, and suffering death,
> The penalty to thy transgression due,
> And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:
> So only can high Justice rest appaid.
> The Law of God exact he shall fulfil
> Both by obedience and by love, though love
> Alone fulfil the Law. . .(12.386-404)

This fight which is not a duel, an important distinction given the Miltonic heroic code of spiritual trial, is the second of the three betwixt Satan and the Son. The first physical battle in Heaven posted Satan, the individualist, against the Son, decked from God's armory. The second will be the subject of Paradise Regained, the temptation in the desert in which the Son's ability to withstand Satan's wiles will

regain the loss of Eden. The third meeting, unrecorded in the Milton canon, but implied in each of the epics, is the fight of the Final Judgment.

The duel not dreamed of is a symbol of the fight that goes on in the souls of the human characters of this poem. This interior fight, it may be argued, is similar to the trial which was so exalted in Areopagitica. But, as we maintained earlier, trial is not the same for post-lapsarian man as it was for the possessors of Eden. The ninth book makes clear that trial, the same trial Milton envisaged as the means of determining truth from falsehood in the prose treatise, is not the trial of Paradise Lost. Initially, one of Adam's persuasive arguments to keep Eve from seeking to work independently is to "Seek not temptation." "Trial," he asserts, "will come unsought"(9.364-66). She does not listen to him, and goes to work in the garden alone. After her lapse, but preceding his act of disobedience (although, following his decision to die with her), Eve cries out at Adam's resolve in praise of

> This happy trial of thy Love, which else
> So eminently never had been known (9.975-76)

What Eve calls trial, though, is a sham trial. They have never had reason to doubt their love; trial, for post-lapsarian man, is a purification. There is no need to purify that which wants it not, and Adam's and Eve's love was pure. Trial, as Adam suggests after his fall, was not necessary for him and his wife. At one point, he scoffs at Eve's idea of "glorious trial"(9.1177). At another, he says:

> Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
> The Faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
> Such proof, conclude, they then begin to fail. (9.1140-42)

The desire for trial is the genesis of failure. Such a sentiment seems discordant both ethically in Milton's philosophy, with his view of the holy war, and dramatically in Milton's poem, in Adam's mouth. Adam states that "henceforth" trial should not be sought. Milton argues somewhat otherwise in Areopagitica. It must be remembered, however, that Adam is arguing from a just-lapsed perspective; he is fallen, but has not accrued the knowledge of the "state of man [as it] now is." The second education, that given him by Michael, is yet to come. Adam, speaking for the future, speaks from the knowledge of the past, and that knowledge is of an innocent state.

The fight, then, is not a trial, in the sense of good and evil meeting in a combat, both arising from within. Such a trial is the case for fallen man, where "we bring not innocence into the world." In the innocent world, the trial is between the perfect state within — showing obedience and love towards God — and the taint of evil without — showing independence and revolt from God. Adam and Eve have the heroism of the Son within them: they are "Perfet within, no outward aid require"(8.642). Their choice of disobedience is an act of independence; actually, as Professor Frye notes, a "pseudo-act." Indeed, the patience of obedience is not passive; the act of disobedience is passive. As soon as Adam recognized Eve's fallen state "all his joints relax'd," and the flowers he had been preparing for Eve (an indication, perhaps, of the unnecessity of the "trial of love") fell from his "slack hand"(9.891-92). Indeed, as God says of the Fall, Adam and Eve were "Made passive both"(3.110). True heroism, like the Arabian bird of lore, is "then vigorous most / When most unactive deem'd"(SA 1704-05). The choice for Adam is whether to obey God or passion, in

this case an egocentric emotion. The moment is crucial; it is a test of Adam's education. He chooses the passionate response; he chooses Eve over God. From the heroic archetypes with which he has been presented, Adam chooses the Satanic code of egocentricity.

The Fall of Adam and Eve, as Milton portrays the event, is a composite act; each of the pair exhibits certain reactions to his tempter, which, taken together, demonstrate the composition of the sin of disobedience. In fine, we cannot agree with critics who argue that Milton was not very concerned with "how the disobedience came about, [or] what was behind it."[22] Such a conclusion accounts for neither Milton's premises concerning the fall of man nor Milton's consummate artistry, through which he gives a portrayal of the Fall which encompasses more than one motive. Milton's belief in the panorama (one would say Pandoraic, if such a word existed) of sins effected by the original lapse should convince us of his interest in "what was behind" the fall.

> If the circumstances of this crime are duly considered, it will be acknowledged to have been a most heinous offence, and a transgression of the whole law. For what sin can be named, which was not included in this one act? It comprehended at once distrust in divine veracity, and a proportionate credulity in the assurances of Satan; unbelief; ingratitude; disobedience; gluttony; in the man excessive uxoriousness, in the woman a want of proper regard for her husband, in both an insensibility to the welfare of their offspring, and that offspring the whole human race. . . .[23]

The list goes on; but most important is the emphasis Milton places on the relationship between the progenitors of the whole human race and the whole human race. Commenting on the passage from 1 Corinthians 15:22, stating "in Adam all die," Milton writes "undoubtedly therefore all sinned in Adam." The essence of the argument is that Adam is the

pattern of mankind. The despair, then, some critics fall into at the inability to draw a "formula" might, and should, imply that Milton did not mean to offer a formulaic answer to man's fall; the formula is better described as a pattern, and the pattern is that of all men and women. Milton demonstrated in the initial Fall, the tendencies of the universal lapses proceeding from it: this, we will recall, is the story of "our woe."

One other clause in the catalogue of sins proceeding from the fall is of interest to us; the Edenic couple, Milton says, showed a distrust in God and a proportionate trust in Satan. We are suggesting that the choice to follow Satan's ways and not God's is a sign of their choice of heroic pattern. So, when Eve eats of the fruit, she begins to show a marked change in her view of God, her heroic crux. He that gave her life and to whom she prayed openly now becomes

> Our great Forbidder, safe with all his Spies
> About him. (9.815-16)

The protective deity now becomes the overbearing tyrant of an oligarchic state. Such, we will note, is the rhetoric of Satan. Indeed, Eve does sound satanic in the extreme after her fall. Considering whether to tell Adam of her transgression or not, she muses on her new power:

> But to Adam in what sort
> Shall I appear? shall I to him make known
> As yet my change, and give him to partake
> Full happiness with mee, or rather not,
> But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power
> Without Copartner? so to add what wants
> In Female Sex, the more to draw his Love,
> And render me more equal, and perhaps,
> A thing not undesirable, sometime
> Superior: for inferior who is free? (9.816-26)

"For inferior who is free?": the rhetoric, laced with sophistry, is Satan's. Eve in articulating it pronounces her adherence to the heroic code of egocentricity. She wishes to be superior and if we recall Satan's "glory sole"(9.135), Eve's "power / Without Copartner" will strike us with the force Milton intended. Eve, then, is but the first of the two-part fall.

Adam's lapse demonstrates other aspirations and other results. Adam's concern is with the mortality associated with his deeds. As he decides to transgress God's commands, he declares:

> And mee with thee hath ruin'd, for with thee
> Certain my resolution is to Die. . . (9.906-07)

These sentiments, Professor Waldock argues, are laudable. They might be to a romantic reading of the poem — the reading, let it be unequivocally stated, with which Milton has been tempting the reader. It is a reading that admires Satan's fortitude, and Adam's "initiative," let us call it. Waldock calls Adam's emotional state one of "selflessness in love"; this is a rather puzzling "selflessness" if we regard these lines of Adam's final speech before he eats of the fruit: [24]

> . . if Death
> Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life;
> So forcible within my heart I feel
> The Bond of Nature draw me to my own
> My own in thee, for what thou art is mine. . .(9.953-57)

The first thing we may notice about this speech is its definite lack of selflessness; there are ten personal pronouns, of which seven are first person references. The tenor of the speech is more selfish than selfless.

The second point of this speech is its obvious romantic element, which is also evident in the quotation preceding this one. Adam's view of mortality is that of the knight of chivalry; death is a talent to be spent on a lovely lady. Death in Paradise Lost, rather, is an ugly presence. At the "brink of chaos," he "with delight snuff'd the smell / Of mortal change on Earth"(10.272-73). This feat of inhalation is a fit contrast to the belief of a glorious death for a lady in distress. Adam, when he is educated by Michael, realizes the odious nature of death:

> But have I now seen Death? Is this the way
> I must return to native dust? O sight
> Of terror, foul, and ugly to behold,
> Horrid to think, how horrible to feel! (11.462-65)

Chivalry has succumbed to reality. Adam's romantic fancy has been altered; part of the process of Michael's visit, it seems, is to educate Adam to act properly as he did not when the crucial moment of obedience came.

Adam's and Eve's lapses, then, have in them different elements. Eve's fall is based on her desire to be superior. This, we know, is part of Satan's code of glory. Adam's fall contains the elements of the chivalrous standards of heroic conduct and the self-love that is part of this ideal. We must remember Milton's denigratory view of the ostentation of knighthood:

> . . .tilting Furniture, emblazon'd Shields,
> Impreses quaint, Caparisons and Steeds;
> Bases and tinsel Trappings, gorgeous Knights
> At Joust and Tournament. . .(9.34-37)

Moreover, Adam and Eve together forego the heroic code of loving God for the heroic code of desiring to be God: "and fancy that they feel /

Divinity within them breeding wings"(9.1009-1010). This is Satan's greatest aspiration, and, of course, conversely, his basest descension. The heroic code which the invocation in this ninth book had hailed as the "better fortitude" is now, truly, a thing of the past and a thing of the future. Presently, the lapse from this heroic code indicates that this poem is left wanting a hero.

From the point of view of earthly heroes, then, Paradise Lost is without one. The Son and Satan represent the two poles of the heroic archetypes. But, as we mentioned before, the Son is the paradigm of heroic love and obedience, not truly the hero of the poem. Abdiel is a reinforcement of the theocentric heroic code, but, once again, not the hero. Adam and Eve were the heroes of Paradise Lost until they chose to depart from the heroic code. This leaves us, then, in the dilemma of having a heroic poem without a hero.

V

Addison argues this point of the hero-less poem:

> The Paradise Lost is an Epic, [or a] Narrative Poem, he that looks for an Hero in it, searches for that which Milton never intended.[25]
> . .

There are plenteous examples of heroic conduct within Paradise Lost; indeed, the poem offers the archetype of the heroism in which Milton believed. Nonetheless, the poem does want a hero. Addison reluctantly concedes that if a hero must needs be named then that hero is the Son. We would agree with Addison's reluctance more than his concession; the Son, we maintain, is the heroic archetype, distinct from the hero.

A recent trend in the criticism of Milton deals with the role of the reader in the poetry.[26] It is not, we surmise, a type of critical

approach at which Milton would be surprised. From the invocation, he has included the audience into his poem. The second word of the poem is the abstract "Man," offering its application to the species in general. The third line contains the invitingly inclusive first-person plural pronoun, "our" followed by "woe," offering a chance to trace the origin of the basic human problem of pain; a communion of sorrow, if you will. The fifth line includes the auditor with another first-person pronoun, "us," as we find ourselves solicited to join in the restoration of Eden. In the invocation, we have been included in the losing and regaining of paradise. Throughout the poem we are asked to chant celebratory hymns in heaven, to breath the fresh, as we have never known fresh, air of Eden. That the poem is inclusive will be attested to when one considers the regular use of the parental nomenclature for Adam and Eve: "first of women Eve"(4.409); "Mother of human Race"(4.475); "Adam first of men"(4.408); "our general Ancestor"(4.659). The poem becomes not the story of two remote people, but, as Dr. Johnson points out, the story of our parents; it becomes a family chronicle of sorts.[27]

This effect, and we suggest it is a legitimate effect, is suggestive when we consider the possible hero of Paradise Lost. The two possibilities, then, are the poet and the reader. Theirs is the interactive relationship common to most poetry, but seldom achieved with such subtlety. Professor Di Cesare suggests that the poet begins to take on characteristics of a creator, then the Creator, and by the end of book ten, when all other characters have exhausted their heroic status, the poet becomes the explicit hero of the poem.[28] Professor Hagin, whose interest, significantly, is to trace the decline of heroic poetry after Milton, suggests that there are two heroes in Paradise

Lost: "The hero of Paradise Lost is not merely Man (Adam and Eve), but also man (everyman)." [29] Extending this reading, while acknowledging his debt to Hagin, Professor Shawcross claims:

> The hero of Paradise Lost is thus not just an ordinary hero of literature, not a specific personage within the work, but rather every man who follows the path, who learns like Adam the sum of wisdom.[30]

"The hero of Paradise Lost," Shawcross concludes, "is the fit audience; the hero may be the reader."

The suggestion that Adam, at the end of the poem, and the reader along with him are the heroes of Paradise Lost seems to be overstating the case, slightly. Adam does learn the lesson of true heroism in the final book of the poem. Adam, having listened to Michael's conclusion to the relation of the Second Coming, repeats his lesson:

> Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
> And love with fear the only God, to walk
> As in his presence, ever to observe
> His providence, and on him sole depend,
> Merciful over all his works, with good
> Still overcoming evil, and by small
> Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak
> Subverting worldy strong, and worldy wise
> By simply weak; that suffering for Truth's sake
> Is fortitude to highest victory,
> And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life;
> Taught this by example whom I now
> Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest. (12.561-73)

He acknowledges his mistake, which was to choose the heroic code of Satan over that of his "Redeemer." And he gives a wonderful articulation of the heroic code of patient martyrdom for the love of God. But does acknowledging his mistake and recognizing the proper path on which to wend his solitary way make Adam a hero? He is a hero who has lapsed from the heroic code and, albeit, regained that code. But we

must remember that the lapse was the Original Fall; this was no mere stumble. Milton's view of the fall should make it clear that Adam's transgression is serious. He may have been the hero until the fall, but his action at the crux of the ninth book, especially when we consider the code of heroism so gloriously hailed in the invocation in that book, makes Adam unheroic, or, perhaps, anti-heroic until he is taught the code of his "Redeemer." But he is only taught the code; he is not a hero within this poem.

Milton, throughout the poem, has been concerned with its pragmatic effect; hence, the invitation to consider our relation to the Edenic pair, and the concern with the inner soul. But, Milton's artistry, as we suggested earlier, owes something to Spenser. The method of presentation in Paradise Lost, we would argue, is notably indebted to Spenser's Faerie Queene. Milton had praised Spenser for his ability to take the reader directly into the bower of temptation, to let the reader taste and recognize the temptation, and then to withdraw and acknowledge the evil of the temptation. Milton achieves the same effect in Paradise Lost. He begins the poem in Hell to show the heroic code of action and egocentricity. He then shows the heroic code of selfless love in heaven. In the ninth book, it could be argued that Milton gives the reader every chance to fall with Adam and Eve, once again to choose the heroic code of egocentricity. The final statement of the true heroism, of following the example of the Son, is to remove any doubts as to which heroic code is the fit one for the warfaring man.

But, Milton chose to work with a subject with negative capabilities; the Fall of Man is basically an unheroic theme. Milton's most impressive invocation, as we noted, takes place at the beginning of

the ninth book, the book of the Fall. The conspicuous placement of the invocation, with its glory-call of the "better fortitude," should make us recognize Milton's process. Just as we have noticed that the supernal and the infernal are imposed on the garden of Eden, so, analogously, we may notice Milton's artistry of negative juxtaposition, an artistry which imposes a statement of the code of heroic conduct as a preface to the narrative of man's initial departure from that code. The negativity of such a juxtaposition is not one of pessimism, but rather an attendant emotion of the subject which Milton chose. To sing of the "First Disobedience," and to "justify the ways of God to men," Milton must juxtapose the ideal and the real, that is, the opportunity for Adam to abstain, and Adam's conduct as it happened. In terms of heroism, Adam chose not the ideal; but in the book of the poem in which he chose to die with, and for, Eve, we are presented with the type of heroism in which the hero dies for God: "Heroic Martyrdom." The choice is the evidence of theodicy.

The subject of the poem, though, does not allow for a hero. The plot contains some necessarily negative implications. The hero, if Adam be considered as that, fails. And the reader, if he has chosen the proper path, if he has resisted the temptations the poem offers as they occur, is heroic, in that he has known, considered, and yet abstained from the temptations. But can we say that he is the hero of the poem? We choose, rather, to say that the poem works not at defining its hero so much as it works to define its heroic archetypes; and the heroic archetype of the Son is presented as that most desirable to be emulated. The key word, we suggest, in Professor Shawcross' statement is "may." Once again, choice is the reason; the choice of heroism is the reader's

just as it has been Adam's and Eve's. Paradise Lost demonstrates what constitutes Miltonic heroism, and it achieves its poetic renunciation of the Homeric heroic code which the Aeneid had but tempered. But, ultimately, we must say that the poem has no hero.

Chapter Four

"More Humane, More Heavenly": Heroism in Paradise Regained

> . . .to give a Kingdom hath been thought
> Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
> Far more magnanimous than to assume. (II.481–83)

Paradise Regained has always received lesser recognition than Milton's earlier epic. The poem belongs to a genre distinct from that of Paradise Lost, a genre which excites not the heroic fervour of the epic. In The Reason of Church Government (1642), Milton outlined the various genres which he would later employ. The two epic genres, he noted, are the "diffuse," whereof Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, Virgil's Aenead, and Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered are examples; and the "brief model," of which the book of Job is the only example Milton cites.[1] It is generally accepted that Paradise Regained is Milton's effort to emulate the "brief epic." Milton's brief epic, an early editor Thomas Newton noted,

> is much the same as that of the book of Job, a good man triumphing over temptation: and the greatest part of it is in dialogue as well as the book of Job, and abounds with moral arguments and reflections. . ." [2]

Paradise Regained, moreover, is the poem in which Milton concluded another objective which he had set in The Reason for Church Government: namely, "to lay the pattern of a Christian Heroe."[3] Initially, that is in 1642, Milton felt that the pattern of a Christian hero could be portrayed in a "king or knight before the conquest." [4] Milton's original plans for his epic poem also suggest that he considered King Arthur as

an appropriate subject for a Christian epic. By the time of the actual composition of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, though, Milton had chosen not an example of a Christian hero, but the archetype of the Christian hero: Christ. As we have seen, Christ is the paradigm of heroic conduct in Paradise Lost. In his disinterested charity and supreme faith lies the basic code of what we have termed "Miltonic heroism." Paradise Regained goes further in the portrayal of the consummate (indeed, prototype) Christian hero, the hero of faith, of charity, of obedience. And Paradise Regained offers that hero the basic medium of Miltonic heroism, the field of temptation: the battlefield of the spiritual warrior. Paradise Regained is, as we shall see, as stringent a re-definition of heroism as Paradise Lost had been. Furthermore, Paradise Regained has in it a more didactic aim; as Newton noted, it "abounds with moral arguments and reflections." As such, its success as an instructive artifice has never really been questioned. Rather, the artistry and characterization of the work has been attacked.

The hero of the poem, Christ, has been accused of being "too serene and forbidding," of wanting that "note of passionate, and self-forgetting love."[5] The portrayal of Christ in Paradise Regained is based on an understanding of the moral requirements of the hero of faith. Perhaps, though, such moral rectitude in a work of art does not appeal to our own century. As we shall see, however, the character of Christ is drawn purposefully. Renunciation of the worldly does not entail courtesy. Heroism in Paradise Regained, ultimately, is theocentric as is the heroism in Paradise Lost. God, as He himself tells Abdiel, is the code by which one judges his actions. Glory to, fame from, and obedience of God are the proper actions of the Christian

hero: "for this was all thy care / To stand approv'd in sight of God, though Worlds / Judg'd thee perverse. . ." The heroic code which entails a self-centered glory, a self-interested quest for fame, and obedience to the natural self is a heroic code which Milton criticizes in his poetry; and Paradise Regained is the most concentrated denunciation of this code. Self-containment has no role in the Miltonic hero; all is from, by, and for God. Christ's character in Paradise Regained is in complete accord with the Christ of the gospels (those portions, amongst others, dealing with the temptation in the desert) and the Christ whom each person is exhorted to follow in example: the Christ who renounces the worldly in favour of the heavenly, and who does it amidst a world offered in the most heavenly splendour by Satan. Christ's character, as we shall see, is the character of the "true warfaring Christian," the pattern of the Christian hero.

The heroism, then, which Paradise Regained proposes is presented in contrast with a type of heroism with which the epic is traditionally associated: the classical hero, which we have examined in the first chapter. Paradise Regained offers a re-definition of the Homeric code of heroism; and the new code of heroism is defined by contrast with the Homeric code. The various aspects of the Homeric hero are criticized through a detailed comparison with the Christian heroic code. The view of mortality, the emotional basis of heroism, the medium of heroic conduct, the consciousness of the hero of his task, the means of heroic accomplishments, and the basis of the heroic world — physical or spiritual — are aspects through which Milton criticizes classical heroism and, in the process, defines Christian heroism. Before examining Milton's juxtapositional definition of a heroic code, we may

find it helpful to deal briefly with some points which make the gospel story of Christ's temptation in the desert a fit subject for Milton's poem and purpose.

I

Paradise Lost ends with a vision of Redemption. Michael descends to the now-fallen Adam and offers Adam a vision of the eventual outcome of his fall, a battle between Satan and the Son of God. Nor is this duel to be a physical confrontation. As Michael describes it to Adam, he says,

> . . .Dream not of thir fight,
> As of a Duel, or the local wounds
> Of head or heel: not therefore joins the Son
> Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
> Thy enemy; nor so is overcome
> Satan, whose fall from Heaven, a deadlier bruise,
> Disabl'd not to give thee thy death's wound:
> Which hee, who comes thy Saviour, shall recure,
> Not by destroying Satan, but his works
> In thee and in thy Seed: nor can this be,
> But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
> Obedience to the Law of God . . .(PL 12.386-97)

The Son of God shall redeem Adam's progeny by confronting and defeating Satan. This confrontation is not to be a physical "duel" but a spiritual combat. The weapons will not be the mountains of the War in Heaven, but the redemptive weaponry of obedience and charity: "Both by obedience and by love, though love / Alone fulfil the Law"(PL 12.403-04). Clearly, the poet who concludes Paradise Lost looks forward to Paradise Regained. The subject's fitness must have been appealing to the mind which saw heroism in the ability to withstand trial, which saw glory in the ability to overcome temptations. The basic situation of Paradise Regained, we would argue, is the germinal setting of Miltonic

heroism: the antagonistic force of temptation, the dusty field of trial, and the undeniable glory of victory by obedience. The tradition of the Second Adam who regains the loss of the first Adam is a fit conclusive subject for the poet who wrote of "man's first disobedience."

One conflict which has arisen concerns the theological basis of Milton's poem, whether Christ as Milton portrays him is God or man. If Christ undergoes the temptation in the desert as God, the drama of the poem is truly diminished. The point is suggested by certain critics, although Milton seems to have taken pains to avoid such a view.[6] In his De Doctrina Christiana, Milton argues that Christ undertook kenosis, emptied himself of his divinity for the act of Redemption, and suffered the pains of the world on his head. Milton writes,

> How much better is it for us to know merely that the Son of God, our Mediator, was made flesh, that he is called both God and Man, and is such in reality.[7]

Milton believed, like his God in Paradise Lost, in the justice of the redemptive test. Simple mercy was not enough; and God's justice could only be fulfilled by the sacrifice of an "exalted man." As Milton writes,

> That Christ was very man, is evident from his having a body, . . .It is true that God attributes to himself also a soul and spirit; but there are reasons most distinctly assigned in Scripture, why Christ should be very man . . .Finally, God would not accept any other sacrifice, inasmuch as any other would have been less than worthy.[8]

Moreover, within the poem, within Milton's poetical theology in fact, the Son does accept mortal shape. "Account mee man," he claims in the famous Council in Heaven in which he undertook to act the role of the Redeemer in the third book of Paradise Lost. Throughout Paradise

Regained, Christ is referred to as assuming mortal form — "In Fleshly Tabernacle, and human form," the Angelic Choir chime out. Indeed, from the invocation to the quiet return to his mother's house, Christ is man.[9]

It is important that Christ undergo the temptation in the desert as man for the sake of divine justice, and theological propriety, and even some sort of dramatic advantage. For our purposes, however, it is doubly important in that Christ as God is not, nor can be, heroic. The virtues of the hero are humility, patience, and obedience; or, stated in their total formulae, humility in the presence of God, patience in waiting for God's sign, and obedience to God's authority. God, in the code of heroism, is the recipient and the origin — the primal force, as we shall see — of heroism. If we set the situation up as an equation ($x + y = x$), God (x) is the originating force and the ultimate sum; man (y), in mathematical and, for Milton, theological, terms is nothing. The basis of Miltonic heroism is its theocentricity. This point is of the utmost importance to Milton's heroic code. In explicating the heroic code which Paradise Regained offers, we find a preponderant reliance of the hero on the will of God. Strength is not a feature which Milton incorporated into his hero. The initial basis of Miltonic heroism is the paradox of strong weakness. This oxymoron represents the theocentric view of heroism which Milton proposed. All strength comes from God. The first temptation, that of turning the stones to bread, is rejected because succumbing to it would have signified a reliance on man's abilities. The Son answers the offer to turn the stones into bread thus:

> Man lives not by Bread alone, but each Word
> Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed

Our Fathers here with Manna. . .(I.349-51)

The Son rejects the present temptation and refers to a previous instance of God's bounty. The answer is basic in its faithfulness: God is the sole requirement of life, above food, above knowledge, above kingdoms. The Son shows his faith in God in his initial foray into the desert. He is, significantly, "led" into the desert — led, because God has the overwhelming control over human affairs. The Son has not even the knowledge of why he goes into the desert. He says,

> And now by some strong motion I am led
> Into this Wilderness, to what intent
> I learn not yet; perhaps I need not know;
> For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.(I.290-93)

The note is definitely submissive. If such a statement was made by a soldier on the fields before Ilium, its author would strike us as weak and helpless. Such are not worthy sentiments for the Homeric hero. But such are the prerequisites for Christian heroism. Humility comes from the recognition that all one's actions are ultimately from, and for the glory of, God.

The note of Miltonic heroism which we had seen in Adam's speech in the twelfth book of Paradise Lost is practiced by the Christ of Paradise Regained. It is worthwhile to quote the important passage again, as it establishes the basis of the heroic tradition of which Milton's Christ is the archetype. Adam recites, as it were, the lesson he has learned to Michael:

> Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
> And love with fear the only God, to walk
> As in his presence, ever to observe
> His Providence, and on him sole depend,
> Merciful over all his works, with good
> Still overcoming evil, and by small

> Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak
> Subverting worldly strong, and worldy wise
> By simply meek; that suffering for Truth's sake
> Is fortitude to highest victory . . .(PL 12.561-70)

The paradox is essential: weakness shall overcome worldly strength, meekness shall overcome worldly wisdom. The small shall accomplish great things. God, in Paradise Regained, looks on His Son in the desert and asserts the paradox's validity:

> By Humiliation and strong Sufferance:
> His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength(I.160-61)

The paradox of weakness overcoming worldly strength is the premise of the conclusion that even the weakest aspect of God's strength — man — can conquer the strongest of worldly strength. Once again, the tenor is God.

God mentions the twin aspects of "Humiliation and strong Sufferance." It is an accepted tradition that Christ's ministry of redemption is one which is based on his humiliation and exaltation. Christ's trial — his "exercise" God calls it — is that through humiliation he will be exalted, through obedience he will come to be obeyed. Christ recognizes this aspect of his trial; he says to Satan,

> . . .who best
> Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
> Well hath obeyed; just trial e'er I merit
> My exaltation without change or end.(III.194-97)

The patient hero, humble in his suffering, becomes the king of the world. He will be exalted; but his glory is, once again, the glory of God.

Regarding the famous renunciation of the "miscellaneous rabble," some critics have thought the germ of the idea more Milton-like than

Christ-like.[10] It must be noted that the primary reason for the renunciation is the rabble's preference for "Things vulgar." The topic under question is glory, with which Satan is trying to tempt Christ. Satan says that "glory [is] the reward / That sole excites to high attempts the flame / Of most erected Spirits. . ."(III.25-27). Glory is the reason for performing high deeds. Glory — traditional earthly glory, which is what Satan is offering — resides in the minds of the rabble. The Son simply contrasts the praise of the rabble — "Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise" — with true glory. He says:

> This is true glory and renown, when God
> Looking on th' Earth, with approbation marks
> The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
> To all his Angels, who with true applause
> Recount his praises. . .(III.60-64)

Job is the prime example. He was famous in heaven, unknown on earth. Glory, furthermore, is not the province of man, alone. Man, Christ points out, "Hath nothing"(III.135), and he who has nothing is inglorious. Glory, rather, is achieved by advancing God's glory.

> Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
> That who advance his glory, not thir own,
> Them he himself to glory will advance. (III.142-44)

In the equation we had created earlier (x + y = x), man (y), by raising God's glory, is raised to the eminence of existence. He is, if the pun be excused, given a reason to live: he is given a "y."

The other highly controversial episode in the poem is Christ's renunciation of Athens. Some critics, once again, claim that the renunciation of Greek learning is more Milton's thought than Christ's — a criticism whose basis is difficult to comprehend, as if a poet were not allowed to infuse his own poem with "things characteristical," a

license Shakespeare was readily allowed. The renunciation of Greek learning, though, is perfectly in keeping with Christ's basic beliefs. Satan offers the Greek world with this invitation: "Be famous then / By wisdom. . ."(IV.221-22). Satan offers Christ the wisdom of "the Gentiles," philosophers, he says, who are "led by Nature's light"(IV.228). The Son answers "sagely" (a fit adverb considering the temptation) that

> he who receives
> Light from above, from the fountain of light,
> No other doctrine needs, though granted true . . .(IV.288-90)

The renunciation is not completely dismissive. Socrates, Plato, Pyrrho, and Epicurus are treated fairly. They must be dismissed in light of the truth of the Word of God. It must be made clear that this is not a fusion of philosophies, but a supersession of God's Word over Nature's. The philosophy of stoicism comes under the most severe attack because it represents a self-encompassing attitude. Socratic thought and Platonism do not deny divinity; they rely on its goodness. Stoicism, though, abhors and avoids the world in the belief that they are in themselves capable of overcoming the evil of the world. Christ's blistering attack on stoicism begins thus:

> The Stoic last in Philosophic pride,
> By him call'd virtue; and his virtuous man,
> Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
> Equal to God . . .(IV.300-03)

The major criticism of stoicism is its egocentricity, its belief in its own power. Stoics, Christ complains, "to themselves / All glory arrogate, to God give none. . ."(IV.314-15). The renunciation of Greek culture, then, is not a rejection based on a Puritan code of ethics

which a younger Milton might not have held so doctrinally. Rather, the renunciation of Greek culture is necessary to the tenor of the poem, to its theocentric theme. God's Word is the sole necessity. All else, Christ asserts in a lyrical and unforgettable image, is "worth a sponge; / As Children gathering pebbles on the shore"(IV.329-30).

The most important theme of Miltonic heroism, as we have seen, is its theocentricity. The celebration of human achievement is always tempered by the recognition of its primal source. Nor can this aspect of Milton's thought be regarded as more Puritan than humanitarian. As Professor Bush has astutely pointed out, even at this point in his life Milton still held the traditional values of the "Christian humanist." [11] In the renunciation of Greek culture, the Son remarks on the anthropocentric tendency of Greek philosophy. This criticism is especially pointed when we recognize that Satan embodies many of the traits which Christ denounces. Thus, the criticism of the Hellenic philosophy is not only explicit, as in the Son's renunciation; it is implicit in the person of Satan. The Christian hero, furthermore, is established in contrast with the classical hero portrayed, to an extent, by Satan.

II

The various aspects of the Homeric heroic code which we catalogued in the introduction are represented by Satan. In contrast to his ethics, the true Christian hero is defined. We have so far seen Milton's theocentric vision — how his heroism is in no way one of self-reliance. The hero's overwhelming dependence on God may detract somewhat — if not totally — from the human achievement of heroism.

Perhaps it may be argued that the Homeric vision of human elegance and bravery is preferable to the hero who is nothing without God; but, for Milton, such a vision was sadly myopic. Noting that God was the source of human achievement did not mean a denial of the achievement; it merely meant recognizing the profound source of the achievement. From a human perspective, Homer's is a more appealing portrayal. Milton would argue, however, that it was but a surface portrayal; and truth — profound truth that traced the effect to its original cause — is far more beautiful: "So fares it when with truth falsehood contends"(III.443).

The emotion of Achilles is anger. It is an emotion which we suggest dominates the Iliad. In Paradise Regained, Satan is imbued with anger. He is "with envy fraught and rage"(I.38); he is "inly stung with anger and disdain"(I.466); he is, ultimately, "swoln with rage"(IV.499). Christ, on the other hand, is temperate, patient, unmoved, and calm.[12] The emotion of the classical heroic code is contrasted with the new emotion of the Christian heroic code.

As was seen in Diomedes' character, and Achilles', and in the character of each hero of the Iliad, renown was of the utmost importance. The concern for reputation kept Diomedes and Odysseus in the battle; they dare not retreat for fear of being considered unheroic. Their reputation rested on what the rabble thought of them, and the rabble is influenced by the physical actions which they see. The glory based on the praise of the worldly, as we noted, is renounced by Christ. God's recognition of goodness is the sole reward of the warfaring Christian hero. Earthly renown is "but the blaze of fame." It is the blaze of fame which Satan offers to the Son. It is also the blaze of fame on which Satan himself thrives. Satan's impudent offer that Christ

worship him is a sign of the glory for which Satan is constantly striving. Part of the parody of the classical heroic code is fulfilled by Satan's perpetual failure to understand Christ or his mission. When Satan offers money to Christ, his questions imply a complete lack of understanding of Christ's mission. Satan asks,

> Which way or from what hope dost thou aspire
> To greatness? whence Authority deriv'st,
> What Followers, what Retinue canst thou gain,
> Or at thy heels the dizzy Multitude,
> Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?(II.417-21)

Money, Satan suggests, will gain all: honour, friends, conquest, realms. For Satan, followers are the sign of glory.

Satan throughout uses superlative terms: greatest, best, highest.[13] Superlative terms have their place in classical heroism. Achilles is the best warrior; Odysseus the best in counsel and guile. Being the best means being a hero. Conversely, Christ's mission is "by small / Accomplishing great things." We recall the distinction God made in the third book of Paradise Lost. God says that the role of redeemer is the Son's because he is

> By Merit more than Birthright Son of God,
> Found worthiest to be so by being Good.
> Far more than Great or High. . .(PL 3.309-11)

Goodness is an act of submission. Any act of self-dependence is truly an act of pride. Satan places the Son on the pinnacle because "highest plac't, highest is best"(IV.553). But, to alter a timeworn standard for the underdog slightly, the higher they are the harder they fall.

The medium of heroism in the Homeric world is battle; in war the hero establishes himself. War, as we have pronounced, is an act of

destruction, of negation. In Paradise Regained, Christ renounces the glory of battle:

> They err who count it glorious to subdue
> By Conquest far and wide, to overrun
> Large Countries, and in field great Battles win,
> Great Cities by assault: what do these Worthies,
> But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
> Peacable Nations, neighbouring or remote,
> Made Captive, yet deserving freedom more
> Than those thir Conquerers, who leave behind
> Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
> And all the flourishing works of peace destroy. . .(III.71-80)

Christ denounces war as an act of unnecessary violence, an act of negativity, of destruction. He himself is on a redemptive mission, an act of construction, building the civitas dei. His mission will be accomplished, he says, by "deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent, / By patience, temperance . . ."(III.91-92). The new locus for heroism is not the patch of ground before Ilium, but the battlefield of the spirit — the land of Mansoul. And the new medium is trial: Paradise is to be regained "By one man's firm obedience fully tried / Through all temptation. . ."(I.4-5).

When questioned about his "sitting still or thus retiring," Christ answers that he is being

> . . .tried in humble state, and things adverse,
> By tribulations, injuries, insults,
> Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
> Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
> Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
> What I can suffer, how obey. . . (III.189-94)

The medium of self-knowledge is trial. For the Iliadic hero it is trial in battle; for the Odyssean hero it is trial in guile and wisdom. The Christian hero, however, suffers a trial which cannot be manifest in any physical sense. Part of the suffering is the obscurity of the action.

A spiritual warfare attracts no notice: "obscure, / Unmark't, unknown" the hero wages his war against his "Spiritual Foe." Thus, in the invocation, the poet claims he will sing of deeds "Above Heroic, though in secret done"(I.15). Obscurity is a state which the classical hero did not relish; indeed, if obscure he was not a hero. Unobserved heroism is a contradiction in terms. Christ, though, enters the desert obscure and returns at the end of the battle "unobserv'd." Only God and the angelic choir — only the audience that matters — know of the victory of goodness. The Trojan War could boast a divine audience, but there was not the communion which Christ shared after his victory. The Achaians and the Trojans fought each other for each other. They were the combatants and the audience. Their communion was shared with their own: the feast after the battle.

As Christ concludes his catalogue of the afflictions of trial, he mentions the emotional state with which the trial must be undertaken: "without distrust or doubt" — essentially, with faith. This offers a nice contrast to the classical hero whose heroism, we maintained, was based on his level of consciousness in the heat of battle. The Christian hero, likewise, has to maintain a level of consciousness — a consciousness of faith. Christ's sacrifice of himself to save mankind is the prime example of that consciousness; it required a knowing sacrifice of the self.[14] Indeed, as we recall, it was a sacrifice of such proportions that it silenced Heaven. The Christian hero — in this instance, Christ — does not throw himself into trial; he understands that his actions are for the glory of God. Temptation is not rejected perfunctorily; that constitutes asceticism, the rejection of material

goods without consideration of their possible pleasures. The Christian hero knows the pleasures.

In Areopagitica, Milton distinguished between "blank virtue" and "true virtue." It is a distinction which is of the utmost importance to Miltonic heroism. Therefore, we find it useful to quote Areopagitica:

> That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure.[15]

True virtue, on the other hand, consists of a knowing sacrifice of pleasure:

> He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that[16] which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian.

Consciousness, then, is a requisite of the Christian hero.

Paradoxically, Satan is not as conscious of his actions as is Christ of his. Christ descends into himself and discovers the affliction which he must endure; his is not a mission of careless mercy. He is conscious of the pain he has deigned to undergo. Satan, however, is a tool to God's purpose. Christ derisively notes that Satan is a "poor miserable captive thrall" who is serviceable to God. Satan, who thinks himself self-serving, really is the only pre-destined actor on the stage of Paradise Regained.

> But contrary unweeting he fulfill'd
> The purpos'd Counsel pre-ordain'd and fixt
> Of the most High. . . (I.126-28)

Furthermore, when Satan thinks himself in control of the situation, we know that it is only through a power which God has lent him that he acts (III.251; IV.394).

The material world is important to the classical heroic code because of the physical nature of heroism. Physical plunder, even captured slaves, is an emblem of achievement. The material world is rejected by the Christian hero. Parthian arms, Roman glory, Greek learning, all give way before the Word of God. The spiritual battlefield yields no physical plunder.

As was noted, Odysseus was famous for his guile and his wisdom. In Paradise Regained, Satan represents worldly wisdom and worldly guile and neither aspect is acceptable in the Christian heroic code. Satan, Christ says, lives in lies: "lying is thy sustenance, thy food"(I.429). Satan enters the desert disguised in "Rural weeds," then is "seemlier clad." The Odyssean guile is misplaced here. Odysseus' disguises served to help him survive in a world in which survival depended on constant guile. That world is a world in which self-reliance necessitated guile. The world of Paradise Regained needs not self-reliance; reliance on God is the sole means of survival, and God needs no disguises. Odysseus' search for wisdom, a search which also helped him to survive, is also based on self-reliance. Satan, who commands the world of worldly knowledge, represents the attainment of wisdom for its own end. Christ, in contrast, gains his knowledge from God: "what concerns my knowledge God reveals." The Delphic oracle has been replaced by the inner oracle:

> God hath now sent his living Oracle
> Into the World to teach his final will,

> And sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell
> In pious Hearts, an inward Oracle
> To all truth requisite for men to know. (I.460–64)

Worldly wisdom and guile, the standards of the Odyssean world, are superseded by God-given knowledge and divine straightforwardness. Odysseus used wisdom and guile to survive; survival in the new dispensation is dependent entirely on God.

Finally, we approach the ultimate aspect of Homeric heroism which is criticized and superseded by the Christian heroic code: the concept of mortality. As we have seen in the Iliad, mortality is the consummation of the hero. The price of heroism is death. And, yet, the hero fears and despises the price. The greatest of the heroes, Achilles, spends much of the poem lamenting his imminent death. His ultimate heroism is reached when he accepts his fate of mortality. The Christian concept of mortality differs from the Hellenic, and this difference is noted by Christ. Having criticized the false glory of battle-hungry warriors (III.71–80), Christ points out the ultimate end of each hero, which is death:

> One is the Son of Jove, of Mars the other,
> Till Conquerer Death discover them scarce men,
> Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
> Violent or shameful death thir due reward.(III.84–87)

As we recall, Milton's concept of heroism entails mortality as well: the better fortitude of "Heroic Martyrdom." The Christian hero, though, approaches his death with a faithful willingness.

This heroic faith is evident in two characters in Paradise Regained, Christ and Mary. Christ, upon discovering who he is, realizes, as he says, "that my way must lie / Through many a hard assay even to the death"(I.263–64). Recognizing the cost of his mission, he

is "neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd"(I.268). With true and unflagging faith he waits on God's time. Mary shows the same heroic fortitude in her recognition of the pain she must undergo:

> I look't for some great change; to Honor? no,
> But trouble, . . .
> . . .that through my very Soul
> A sword shall pierce; this is my favor'd lot,
> My Exaltation to Afflictions high;
> Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest;
> I will not argue that, nor will repine. (II.86–87, 90–94)

Willing sufferance is the means to exaltation. Obedience is the way to glory, and obedience is self-sacrificial. To obey, as Satan does, through "trembling fear . . .like a Fawning Parasite," is not obedience per se. It is the unheroic aspect of captivity.

As Christ indicates throughout the poem, he must await the fulness of time before he is able to act. God establishes the time for action; the human actor must wait, and waiting presupposes passionate pain. Satan offers Christ "Occasion's forelock." Christ rejects it because "All things are best fulfill'd in their due time," the time, that is, when God decrees. Part of the temptations which Satan offers, then, is the opportunity to act on one's own time, to grasp Occasion's forelock, not to wait for God but to act on one's own initiative: "Not when it must, but when it may be best"(IV.476). Christ must, of course, reject the temptation to act before the appointed time. This, as we have seen, is a basic aspect of Miltonic heroism: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

At the conclusion of the poem, the Angelic Choir reward Christ with an Edenic repast. From the dusty desert he is carried to "a flow'ry valley," and before him is set

A table of Celestial Food, Divine,
Ambrosial, Fruits fetcht from the tree of life,
And from the fount of life Ambrosial drink . . .(IV.588–90)

They who only stand and wait are also served. The choir then sings odes to his victory over the "Tempter proud," and a preponderant theme of the song is time, and the approaching fulness of it: "now thou hast aveng'd / Supplanted Adam"; "A fairer Paradise is founded now"; "Now enter, and begin to save mankind." The victory over time is complete; the exercise in the desert is consummated; the ministry of redemption is about to begin. Paradise lost has been regained "in the waste Wilderness."

Moreover, the Christian heroic code is established. Obedience to God rather than rebelliousness against divinity, humility before God rather than pride in the face of destiny, patience for God's commands rather than action in the face of necessity, charity rather than battle where men kill and die, a spiritual warfare obscure rather than a physical duel renowned, goodness rather than greatness are the aspects of the two heroic codes which Milton juxtaposes, and by implicit criticism of the classical heroic code establishes the Christian heroic code.

The code of classical heroism, which is represented by Satan in Paradise Regained, is renounced. Physical arms, which Satan represents, are rejected by Christ: "Plausible to the world, to mee worth naught"(III.393). It will be remembered that Satan is the only character of the poem who actually uses physical force. Christ's victory at the pinnacle is achieved by faith in God; Satan's defeat is given him by the hand of God. Jesus replies to Satan's final temptation with an ambiguous injunction:

> Tempt not the Lord thy God; he said and stood.
> But Satan smitten with amazement fell. . . (IV.560–61)

In the final rejection of classical heroic standards, Milton offers an epic simile which places Christ as the tenor and Hercules, the greatest of Greek mythic heroes and a type of Christ, as the vehicle; and this simile, Milton evinces, is "to compare / Small things with greatest"(IV.563–64). The classical hero is now fit to act as a simile, a likeness of the reality.[17]

Christ regains paradise, but no glory is ascribed him by the rabble. The feast in the valley is given him alone. The Choir of the Angels rings in his ears, foretelling the final victory of Christ over Satan — the victory which shall give Satan his "last and deadliest wound." It is, significantly, a victory in which Christ shall be "all unarm'd" and his weaponry "the terror of his voice." Christ's armory is the Word.

> And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations. . .(Revelation 19:15)

It is the choice of weapons Christ made in the first debate he carried on within himself in the first book. As Christ recalls his childhood, he follows the episode of his love of learning with a relation of his desire to achieve great deeds:

> . . .yet this not all
> To which my Spirit aspir'd; victorious deeds
> Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts; one while
> To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
> Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
> Brute violence and proud Tyrannic pow'r,
> Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd:
> Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
> By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
> And make persuasion do the work of fear. . .(I.214–23)

The first half of the speech offers the temptation — self-imposed — to do "heroic acts." The number of active verbs — rescue, subdue, quell, free, restore — shows a spirit of heroic actions which must give way to the new heroism, the more humane, more heavenly heroism of persuasion, of patience, of obedience, of humiliation. The second half of the speech offers the verbs of mediation, a fit aspect for the mediator between God and man. The poem has offered a re-definition of magnanimity. Great spirited heroism is truly accomplished, Milton suggests, by submissive and faithful goodness.

It is this second vision of deeds "Above Heroic" that Christ follows throughout the poem. He is tempted; he rejects the temptations. He is tried and humiliated; he succeeds in trial and is exalted. The poem concludes with the quiet ending so fit for the lay of spiritual warfare: "hee unobserv'd / Home to his Mother's house private return'd."

Chapter Five

"Celestial Vigor Arm'd": Heroism in Samson Agonistes

> Or if Virtue feeble were,
> Heav'n itself would stoop to her. (Comus ll. 1021-22)

Samson Agonistes is, for our purposes, Milton's final statement of heroism. Although there are various opinions concerning the date of the poem's composition, the debate is really without our study, and, ironically, for the very reason that the debate exists: the vision of heroism the poem professes.[1] Samson Agonistes is the completion of the Miltonic vision of heroism. The poem, thus, concludes, and aptly, the view of heroism Milton has consistently held throughout his three major poems. The position we offer, that Samson Agonistes rests on the same heroic code as Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, needs some qualification. As the drama has been considered by some critics as Milton's departure from his staunchly rigid (and perhaps inhumane) heroic standard that (they felt) lessened the humanistic interest in Paradise Regained, we will counter that Milton's drama is but the ultimate exposition of his select view of heroic conduct. This study will necessitate some examination of the genre of the poem, its basis as a tragedy. A study of Samson Agonistes as a tragedy and Samson as a tragic hero will further involve us in a brief examination of the concept of Christian tragedy; whether Milton, as a thoroughgoing Christian artist (which he is), could somehow combine his Christian premises and the premises necessary to a tragic dramatic presentation; or whether such an attempt is but syncretic.

I

Professor E.M.W. Tillyard maintains that by the time Milton composed Samson Agonistes he had "regained his faith in action." He suggests that Milton "makes a deed, not a thought, the centre of his drama." This drama, Tillyard further holds, presents a type of heroism not found in the two epics. "In neither Paradise Lost nor Paradise Regained had there been a normal hero." Samson Agonistes differs from the two epics in its major character: "Samson is different: human, fallible, and yet exhibiting to what heroism humanity can rise."[2] The various premises Professor Tillyard makes would suggest that Samson Agonistes is of quite a different tone than Paradise Regained, to which, as the title page of the first edition asserts, it "is added." This conclusion makes necessary one or more of three possible explanations: that Milton wrote Samson Agonistes at an earlier time than his brief epic, that Milton had altered his conception of heroism from Paradise Regained to Samson Agonistes, or that Milton had not a consistent conception of heroism. We suggest that Milton's conception of heroism remains consistent through all his major poetry, and that Samson Agonistes is as fit a complement to Paradise Regained as the brief epic had been to Paradise Lost.

Paradise Regained has been, as we have seen, a poetic paradigm of the Miltonic heroic code. Within its artistic framework we have been offered a manual of proper heroic conduct; in the words of Professor Steadman, a "compendious anatomy of heroic virtue."[3] The various virtues of charity, of temperance, of patience, of faith, and of submission to the will of God have been exhibited in the person of the Son. Truly, one could say of Paradise Regained that it is an anatomy of

Christian heroism, that it is a manual of godly etiquette. But what then does one make of the accompanying volume, Samson Agonistes? If we make a metaphor of the genre of the "anatomy" — that Paradise Regained is the skeletal framework of Christian heroism — then we may suggest that Samson Agonistes is the fleshly exhibition of it. Professor Madsen has taken the line with which Michael informs Adam of the difference between Moses' dispensation and Jesus' as Milton's view of the difference between the type and the truth. Michael, in the twelfth book of Paradise Lost, says to Adam:

> So Law appears imperfet, and but giv'n
> With purpose to resign them in full time
> Up to a better Cov'nant, disciplin'd
> From shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit . . . (PL 12.300-03)

Samson, Madsen concludes, is a significant choice for the character of the drama accompanying the poem describing Christ's heroism, in that Samson as a type of Christ is a "shadowy" representation of the later "Truth." Samson is the flesh; Christ the spirit. Thus, Samson's inability to measure up to the heroic norms of Paradise Regained is a demonstration of the difference from the letter to the spirit.[5] Professor Madsen's insightful examination of the two poems as companion pieces is exemplary. Our one addition to his thesis is that Samson, in one way, demonstrates the similarity of the heroic vision of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes, rather than the difference. That one way, moreover, is, as we have suggested throughout the examination of the two epics, the most important aspect of Miltonic heroism: the theocentricity of the Christian heroic code. Although Samson, as a type of Christ, does exhibit his inferiority — his shadowy

typological significance — nonetheless his heroism is basically founded on the same premise as Christ's: the origin of all heroism is God.

Samson, then, represents the fleshly counterpart of the heroic code which Christ fulfills in spirit. And, in keeping with the metaphor we have suggested, the fleshly representation of heroic conduct — Samson — receives more subtle treatment than had the spiritual representation — Christ. As the flesh is more opaque than the skeleton, so is Samson Agonistes more subtle in its exhibition of heroism than Paradise Regained. In the terms Michael gave to Adam, we are moving from the "Truth" of the heroic code of Paradise Regained to its "shadowy Type," from the spirit to the flesh, from the skeletal framework to the carnal manifestation.

II

One of the debates concerning Samson's status as a tragic hero is based on the conception of Samson Agonistes as a drama of regeneration. Professor John T. Shawcross outlines the argument thus:

> If Samson is regenerated, the argument goes, then the course of the headlong fall resulting from his hamartia has been altered and his 'flaw' must have been overcome. Under such conditions there is no tragedy, for a good — whether Samson's regeneration or his act of destroying the Philistines — has arisen out of evil.[6]

It would serve our discussion to add to this debate one more premise. If the "good" arises despite the "evil," that is if Samson's regeneration and the destruction of the Philistines arise out of a divine stipulation maugre the hero's hamartia or aspirations, then the tragedy is essentially violated. Samson's "heroism", we suggest, cannot be considered as anything but divinely-led. And as such, it cannot rank as tragic heroism. Indeed, the whole drama seems to undercut tragic

conventions; whether, in fact, the drama attempts to undercut the conventions or simply tries to accommodate two basically unconformable ideas will best be seen after an examination of the heroism in Samson Agonistes. To elucidate the heroism of the drama, we will examine the alleged "regeneration" of its hero and the perspective offered by the Chorus and Manoa.

Samson begins the drama in a state bordering on despair.[7] In his opening speech Samson hits a predominant note of desperation (ll.18–109). The speech begins with Samson articulating the Medieval conception of the tragedy of memory.[8] The hero laments his present adversity in light of his precedent glory (18–22). Samson then laments his birth — a basic tragic motif. Samson's complaint, however, also contains a call for theodicy: he wants the ways of God justified to himself. "O wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold," he cries out. "Why was my breeding order'd. . .," he laments. In the first plaint, he questions the reason for his divine calling. In the second plaint, he questions the irony of his imprisonment:

> . . .Promise was that I
> Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;
> Ask for this great Deliverer now, and find him
> Eyeless in Gaza at the Mill with slaves,
> Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke. . .(38–42)

The two questions are followed by a seeming acquiescence to the will of God: "Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt / Divine Prediction. . ."(43–44). This volta in his lamentation, however, is followed by a renewed complaint, which culminates in the criticism of his fundamental composition, namely the means by which God attributed him his strength:

> God, when he gave me strength, to show withal

How slight the gift was, hung it in my Hair.(58–59)

A volta of acquiescence follows: "But peace, I must not quarrel with the will / Of highest dispensation"(60–61). Once again, however, he renews his plaint; this time concerning the "loss of sight."

> Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
> O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
> Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse
> Without all hope of day! (79–82)

As he had done in his criticism of his hair, so he seems to question divine creativity when he asks "why was the sight / To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd?"(93–94). Nor is Samson's criticism of the human body limited to these two references. He complains that God has given him an overabundance of strength without the complementary share of wisdom (52–54).

The speech, then, falls into a certain pattern. Samson questions the divine dispensation, retreats in a volta of submission to the divine will, and renews his plaint of the divine dispensation. Thrice, moreover, his plaints concern the physical composition of man. Samson, as it were, suffers the melancholy of anatomy. Throughout the speech there is more than a hint of despair. The first scene with the Chorus lessens his despair not one whit. Indeed, Samson renews his complaint apropos the incongruous shares of wisdom and strength once more:

> Immeasurable strength they might behold
> In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;
> This with the other should, at least, have pair'd,
> These two proportion'd ill drove me transverse. (206–09)[9]

Samson seems to qualify his blameworthiness by blaming the work of God. God, he argues, <u>should</u> have designed him better. The Chorus alerts us to the basic faithlessness in the argument: "Tax not divine disposal,"

it warns. The two prominent characteristics of Samson at the commencement of the drama, then, are despair and faithlessness. Despair, as Professor Allen points out, is the emotion Milton attributes to his lapsed characters, especially his villains. Satan is desperate in Paradise Lost; Adam and Eve are desperate after the Fall. Moloch and Belial are desperate; despair is the final refuge of a fallen angel: despair, ironically, is his ultimate hope.[10]

Samson, through the course of the tragedy, goes through various "temptations," the temptations — if we may call them so — which occur during the visits of Manoa, Dalila, and Harapha. If we trace Samson's reactions at the end of each temptation we will discover the same recalcitrant faithlessness and despair. During his father's visit, Samson retains a marked desperation. Manoa, it should be noted, is a poor example of a soothing parent. Indeed, until Manoa mentions suicide the thought never enters Samson's mind. At the end of the interview with his father, Samson renews his plaints concerning his blindness and his "Vain monument of strength," and concludes with a desperate lamentation:

> So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
> My hopes all flat, nature within me seems
> In all her functions weary of herself;
> My race of glory run, and race of shame,
> And I shall shortly be with them that rest. (594-98)

At the end of the first allegedly "regenerative" episode, Samson is still desperate and faithless.

The second episode with Dalila is really no temptation whatsoever. As Professor Samuel amusingly suggests, "Dalila is surely the most bird-brained woman ever to have gotten herself involved in major

tragedy."[11] An example of Dalila's ineffectuality as a temptress may be seen in the description of her entrance. The Chorus describes her:

> But who is this, what thing of Sea or Land?
> Female of sex it seems,
> That so bedeckt, ornate and gay,
> Comes this way sailing
> Like a stately Ship
> Of Tarsus, bound for th' Isles
> Of Javan or Gadire
> With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
> Sails fill'd, and streamers waving. . .(710-18)

This visual delight, she seems to forget, would be wasted on her husband. Smartly rigged as she is, Dalila is no temptation to Samson. The only approximation to a temptation is her offer to touch his hand, to rekindle by tactile tactics what she has failed to do through verbosity. Samson, though, will not let her near him; he forgives her at a distance, and thus ends the Dalila episode.

The Harapha episode is considered by most critics to be the crux of Samson's regeneration. Professor Allen is representative of this school of thought when he suggests that Samson's answer to Harapha, when Harapha taunts Samson with the "Presume not on thy God" speech, is the crucial sign of Samson's completed regeneration:

> With this speech [1171-77] we know that Samson will not die an apathetic death. Life has returned to him; and though he does not yet know how it will all be brought about, he is God's champion once more. There is no temptation in this scene and no comedy; it is the most important scene of all, for it is the hinge of the tragedy. By the victory over Harapha, who symbolizes all that is valiant in Philistia, God, working through Samson, has put Dagon down. It is, in truth, the final event of the tragedy in miniature.[12]

Can we say, though, that Samson is "God's champion" now? This implies that God has, in truth, forsaken him, and now is returning to his faithfully-waiting champion. Patience, however, is not the virtue

Samson exhibits especially well on this very occasion. He, from Harapha's first entrance on the stage, has challenged the Philistine champion to combat.[13] Indeed, although Harapha claims that he has merely come "each limb to survey"(1089), Samson immediately responds with a challenge: "The way to know were not to see but taste"(1091). No fewer than eight times more will Samson suggest that they partake of mortal combat. The one quotation which Allen uses to support his argument is significant because in it Samson defies Harapha to "the trial of mortal fight, / By combat to decide whose god is God." Samson, as representative of Israel's God, shows a reliance on the physical world, where faith in the spiritual would be more appropriate. So, for example, when Samson asseverates his supposed faith — "My trust is in the living God"(1140) — he follows that assertion with a reliance on his physical prowess. Come "feel, whose God is strongest," he taunts. The idea of "mortal combat" is in itself ironic, especially in light of Samson's alleged faith in the "living God." Samson also suggests certain measures be taken to maintain an equal fight — "Some narrow place enclos'd." Would not God's "faithful Champion" have enough faith to allow God the choice of circumscription?

Samson, at this crux as he has been throughout the drama, is carnal, reliant on his physical body; the same physical body, it must be remembered, that he had so vehemently criticized in the opening scene. Perhaps, the Harapha incident does animate Samson, but Samson's response is still "flawed."[14] His trust in the living God is little more than a pseudo-fidelity; Samson's trust is in the living Samson, and that is his own idolatry. It will be recalled that when God motioned Samson to marry the woman of Timna (221-22), his obedience was exemplary; his

"intimate impulse," given as it was by God, made the marriage proper. Samson, however, falsely anticipated divine impulse and, shortly thereafter, married another Philistine woman. He has taken God's singular command and pluralized it:

> I thought it lawful from my former act,
> And the same end. . .(231-32)

Samson's behaviour concerning Harapha smacks of the same self-faith as the marriage to Dalila. (This episode, we speculate, may have been what interested Milton in the subject of Samson marrying). God has allowed his champion physical prowess prior to this incident. Samson acts on his own compulsion in challenging Harapha.

Our argument must needs arouse some dispute. One of our basic premises is that Samson is acting without God's compulsion. This assertion may be countered by claiming that Samson is acting with God's compulsion, but we, as an audience, are not aware of the process. Milton, however, takes pains to point out that the decision is Samson's not God's. Initially, as we have shown, there is a reliance on the carnal activity. Moreover, Samson, after the Harapha incident, is still desperate. As Harapha skulks off the stage, rather than demonstrating any sense of regeneration, Samson says, hopelessly:

> But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
> My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,
> The worst that he can give, to me the best. (1262-64)

These are not the words of one whose "life has returned to him." Samson is the same as he has been at the conclusion of each "temptation"; he is still faithless, still desperate. Milton, moreover, demonstrates the effects of God's grace on stage — an act which, with Dr. Johnson, we

must confess makes poor dramatic presentation[15] — in order to show that Samson's previous act was not accompanied with the like grace.

In the final scene, the messenger of the Philistines bids Samson attend him to the Feast of Dagon. Samson denies this request three times (1321, 1332, 1342). Then, and only then, does Samson receive the "rousing motions"(1382) which cause him to decide to accompany the messenger. Milton's explicitness is necessary to demonstrate the difference between Samson's decisions and God's. Samson asseverates that he will not go to the feast; God, when he makes apparent His attendance to Samson, motions him to go to the feast. The juxtaposition of the human reasoning and the divine ordinance makes clear that Samson's decision to fight Harapha was his alone. More importantly still, divine grace was bestowed on Samson arbitrarily. He has not achieved any necessary regeneration; there is not any threshold of human faith that one must achieve before God grants one grace. And, to emphasize the point, Milton has God's disposition overrule Samson's. That Samson Agonistes is a play of regeneration implies that Samson is in some way responsible for preparing himself for God's apparent return (for God has never been absent; he has been unseen by the blind Samson and the blinder Chorus). Samson, rather, is an agent. In the final analysis, his actions have detracted from any moral regeneration. He betrays a desperation quite out of keeping with his role as God's "faithful Champion," and he betrays it after each so-called temptation. Samson has done nothing to prepare himself for God's "rousing motions" of grace. There was nothing he could do. Ultimately, Samson's heroism rests on the divine sanction of it.

III

Milton's purpose in presenting a hero like Samson after such a sublime expression of heroic conduct as the Son's was is significant. By using Samson as his final expression of heroism, Milton indurates his basic proposition, the theocentricity of heroism. God does, and will, act through any agent, be it as perfect a saint as the Son of God or as faithless and carnal a figure as Samson. By showing the two extremes of virtue, Milton shows the essential inscrutability of God's ways; a hero, ultimately, is heroic only through grace. The two works nicely fit together: the first gives the framework of heroic conduct in the presentation of its archetype, the second gives the fleshly, the shadowy, human presentation. Goneril says in quite different context, "O, the difference of man and man." Milton might have countered, "Yes, but the similarity of man and man: His uncontrollable intent."

Tillyard has suggested that there is a difference between Samson and the Son. To suggest otherwise would be inane, but we must point out that Milton emphasizes not the difference, but, ultimately, the similarity of his two heroes. Quite in opposition to Professor Tillyard's assessment, then, we suggest that Samson no more suggests to what heroic heights human nature can rise than did the Son. Samson Agonistes is as theocentric in its conception of heroism as is Paradise Regained.

One final piece of evidence which shows Milton's intent is his choice of subject. The Trinity Manuscript shows that Milton considered five possible Samson plays: Samson at Ramath-Lechi in which "A thousand foreskins fell"(146) by Samson's hand; Samson marrying, a subject

undoubtedly congenial to Milton's mind; Dagonalia in which Samson pulls down the temple of Dagon on himself and the Philistines; Samson Pursophorus in which Samson is at his trickster best in setting fire to the tails of three hundred foxes to burn the corn of the Philistines; and Samson Hybristes which, we conjecture, would have been most suitable to the classical form Milton chose. Significantly, Milton rejected all these subjects for his drama. Of the first four, three of the basic plots involve physical action — the drama about Samson's marriage excluded. Theirs would have been a story of active heroism, a classical standard which Milton had criticized so thoroughly in his two earlier epics. The fifth possible story, that involving an overweeningly proud Samson, would have been in spirit with the classical drama but would detract from the essence of Miltonic heroism, its theocentricity. A hybristic Samson would have been classically fit, but, for Milton, theologically unfit. Hybris presupposes a certain pride in self and a difference in purpose with a divine agent, usually fate, which interaction causes the fall and catastrophe of the hero. Samson does confess to hamartia:

> Fearless of danger, like a petty God
> I walk'd about admir'd of all and dreaded
> On hostile ground, none daring my affront.
> Then swoll'n with pride into the snare I fell. . . (529-32)

A classical tragic hero, however, demonstrates a mission at cross-purposes with the divine agency. Prometheus laments his lapse because of his presumption against Zeus. Oedipus' rashness fulfills the fate of his natal prophecy. Fate is an overwhelming agency in classical tragedy, overwhelming in its moderating force. Those who dare to aspire above the norm — usually symbolized by the chorus — are levelled.

Samson, though, is not at cross-purposes with the divine agency. He is himself the divinely-appointed agent. His hybris is of quite a different type from the classical model. Rather than emphasizing his elevated position in a moderate society, Samson's pride is derogatory. Samson's pride does not, ultimately, cause his death or catastrophe; it is despite his pride, despite, in fact, all his human fallability, that he achieves martyrdom, an act Milton considered "above Heroic."[16] The agonistes, we conjecture, means God's "faithful Champion"(1751), God's athlete, God's performer, God's player. Hybris is a sin of pride, a sin against a greater divine power; an agon, despite his sin of pride, is an agent of that greater divine power.

IV

In our discussion so far, we have seen a tension between the classical tragic hero and Milton's Samson. What is classically fit, we have suggested, is theologically unfit for Milton. This tension between the Hellenistic genre Milton chose and the Hebraic spirit Milton exhibits is at the basis of the problem of Christian tragedy.[17] Milton refers to Samson Agonistes, somewhat cumbersomely, as "that sort of dramatic poem which is call'd tragedy." Even in the prefatory subtitle, Milton seems to show a discomfort with the genre. A discussion of Milton's conception of tragedy includes diverse notions, notions which may seem at odds with modern critical and theological bases. Initially, Milton considers the book of Revelation as a tragedy.[18] Traditionally, the Apocalypse is seen as the consummation of the "divine comedy." It should be noted that Milton bases the generic distinction on the basis of the choral interludes; it is, in effect, a structural distinction.

We do not expect that Milton would have grouped Revelation and Macbeth in the same species of tragedy. This speculation leads us into some fine, sometimes nice, distinctions. But, it is important to distinguish between tragedy and Milton's dramatic piece.

If we begin with the premise that Milton is a Christian artist — that is, an artist whose vision coloured his subject, and whose vision is consistently Christian — then we must conclude that Samson Agonistes is not a tragedy. Christianity, many critics have asserted, is adverse to tragedy.[19] The tragic ethos, the atmosphere necessary to that sense of grandeur and evil, that sense of wasted potential, is dissolved in the greater vision of the cosmic significance of evil, that vision which, as Pope writes, states that:

> All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
> All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see;
> All Discord, Harmony, not understood;
> All partial Evil, universal Good:
> And, spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, 'Whatever IS, is RIGHT.'[20]

This Leibnitzian optimism absolutely dilutes the tragic atmosphere. Tragedy must concentrate on the discord, the chance, the awful force of raw nature in its temporal condition. Evil is not partial to the tragic ethos; evil is all one can be allowed to see. The cosmic vision which translates evil into a divine plan mitigates tragedy. Christianity, basically, offers this cosmic significance to ephemeral evil. And Milton is quintessentially Christian in this way.

Paradise Lost ends with the vision of the new man who will be greater than the old man. Michael descends and tells Adam of the rejuvenation of the world at the Second Coming:

> . . .for then the Earth
> Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
> Than this of Eden, and far happier days.
> So spake th' Arch-Angel Michael, then paus'd,
> As at the World's great period; and our Sire
> Replete with joy and wonder thus repli'd.
> O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
> That all this good of evil shall produce,
> And evil turn to good. . .(PL 12.463-71)

This is felix culpa at its zenith. To contrast Milton's vision — it must be remembered that this episode with Michael is the culmination of the Fall, when the poet changed "Those Notes to Tragic"(PL 9.6) — we need only look at tragedy which excludes this cosmic vision from its presentation.

Shakespeare is not usually called a Christian poet, not due to any recalcitrant faithlessness of his character but because of his earthly poetic vision. Shakespeare could write tragedies because he limited his perspective to the carnal world. It may be theologically Christian to have Troilus laugh at the world's woe as he climbs the ladder to the eighth sphere, the music of "hevenyssh melodie" "herkenyng armonye" in his ears.[21] It is not, however, good tragedy. Good tragedy has not the singing of heavenly melody; in good tragedy the "rest is silence." Likewise, to employ the metaphor Milton uses in the twelfth book of Paradise Lost, if we compare Milton's art with Shakespeare's, we can glean a sense of the disparity between their perspectives.

In Othello, as Lodovico looks on the "tragic loading of this bed," on which lie Desdemona slain by her husband, Emilia slain by her husband, and Othello self-slain, he exclaims, "O bloody period." This is the consummation of the drama, and we are not allowed to see beyond. The one vision of any cosmic value — the only metaphysical expression — is a hopeful vision Othello has of his meeting with Desdemona at

compt, and that vision may be attributed to a guilty imagination, for he dreams Desdemona's look will fling him to hell. As Lodovico says, this is the end of a cycle and the perspective is limited to the bloody waste; the only punctuating mark is the "bloody period." The sentence, so to continue our metaphor, is complete in its earthly significance. In Paradise Lost, the only truly significant punctuating mark is the "the World's great period." Shakespeare could pause at the end of each sentence and look backwards at the tragic grammar that led to that period. Milton, much like his epic Latinate verbal constructions, does not reflect on the individual grammatical sequences; eventually it will all make sense, even if the grammar be convoluted: whatever is, is right. The fall of man, tragic notes notwithstanding, is but a premise in a syllogism in which the conclusion is undoubtedly beneficent. Evil + God (in whom resides faith and, with faith, the perspective of eventual good) = Good. And, as with the formula which we suggested for Miltonic heroism, so in this formula of Miltonic tragedy, God — the mediate premise — is the all-important factor. Even the most significant single event in the history of man, at that point, the Fall, is but at most a comma after which comes the perpetually-visible concluding clause: "goodness infinite."

V

In Samson Agonistes, the hero is roused by God to his heroic action; and the tragedy is mitigated because of the mediating divinity. How tragic can the story of Samson, as Milton presents it, be if we know that he is the agent of a greater good?

Chorus. All is best, though we oft doubt,

> What th' unsearchable dispose
> Of highest wisdom brings about,
> And ever best found in the close. (1745-48)

Within the drama, before the "close," the will of the "highest wisdom" is discovered.

The tragic feelings are muted throughout the final scene, and the mitigation of these tragic feelings is effected through the choral speeches. But what are we to make of the Chorus? Is it not, in fine, as blind as Samson? From the beginning of the play, the Chorus shows itself to be as reliant on physical manifestation of God's efficacy as was Samson. The Chorus tends to view the world through the eyes of a medieval tragic commentator. God is a wheel of fortune which turns arbitrarily. It speaks of Samson's "high estate"(170) and how he is fallen to the "lowest pitch of abject fortune." We will recall Christ's condemnation of such tragic schemes in Paradise Regained:

> Much of the Soul they talk, but all awry,
> And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
> All glory arrogate, to God give none,
> Rather accuse him under usual names,
> Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
> Of mortal things. (PR 4.313-18)

The Chorus, although it does not arrogate glory to itself, tends to ascribe prowess more often to the immediate (and lesser) cause than the original mediate cause, God.

We have seen how Samson's initial speech was marked by faithlessness, how he lamented his inability to see the ways of divinity. The Chorus, we will recall, warned Samson not to tax divine disposal. Ironically, the Chorus is always attempting to tax divine disposal itself; hypocrisy is its marked characteristic. Let us consider the famous articulation of theodicy:

Chorus. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to Men. . .

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
As to his own edicts, found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wand'ring thought,
Regardless of his glory's diminution;
Till by thir own perplexities involv'd
They ravel more, still less resolv'd,
But never find self-satisfying solution.
As if they would confine th' interminable. . .(293-307)

And, with these faithful sentiments, the Chorus proceeds to attempt to confine the interminable. It perplexes itself in the ways of God: "He would not else . . ."(315). At the conclusion of Manoa's visit, the Chorus once again articulates the sentiments of theodicy (652-66). It follows with a questioning of God's ways towards man:

God of our Fathers, what is man!
That thou towards him with hand so various,
Or might I say contrarious,
Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly . . .(667-71)

It does not, however, limit itself to an observation of the inscrutability of God's ways. It appoints itself advisor to Him:

So deal not with this once thy glorious Champion,
The Image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labors, for thou canst, to peaceful end. (705-09)

There is more admonition than prayer in this choral speech. The predominant grammatical structure is the imperative: "deal not," "Behold him," "turn / His." Manoa, who is of the same faithlessness as the Chorus, also counsels God (368-72).

The Chorus, after the Dalila interview, seems to echo Samson's initial criticism of the body human. As we recall, Samson complained that the creation of the body of man was faulty: eyes should be as in

pores, hair should not contain strength, and mind should be equitable to body. The Chorus, as Dalila sails off into the horizon, criticizes God's creation of man's helpmate:

> Is it for that such outward ornament
> Was lavish't on thir Sex, that inward gifts
> Were left for haste unfinish't, judgment scant,
> Capacity not rais'd to apprehend. . .(1025–28)

Did God create women "haste unfinish't"? The motif which has run through the play is that God's work — his visible creation — does not necessarily please man; paradoxically, God's greatest work, man, does not please man.

The Chorus, then, and Manoa, have a degree of presumption concerning divine edicts. They do not understand the essence of God's ways, but they affect an understanding. So, in the conclusion to the Harapha incident, and we have seen how Samson falls into the slough of despond immediately following the Harapha interview, the Chorus rejoices at Samson's animation; an animation, ironically, which wishes to manifest itself in perdition. The Chorus' speech is often quoted to point out the two aspects of Miltonic heroism inherent in Samson Agonistes: physical force and patience. The Chorus presents the two aspects not as complements, but as contradistinct elements of God's grace. The volta from the suggestion of "plain Heroic magnitude of mind" to "patience" is managed with a "But"(1287). The Chorus finally advises patience because of Samson's bereaved sight. The irony of the situation is that the Chorus is wrong on all counts. God, once more, is inscrutable. He will grant Samson active force, despite Samson's bereaved sight. Manoa and the Chorus believe that God must needs grant Samson sight in order for Samson to fulfill his purposed station (1503

ff.). God, however, defies all conjecture; sight, indeed all physical manifestations, give way before the divine will. The ironic twists are numerous. Besighted Samson was of no utility to the Lord; blind Samson could finally, "With inward eyes illuminated," act. And his action has been called for immediately following his one denial of action — his choice to refrain from attending the feast of Dagon.

The Chorus' role at the conclusion of the drama is to assert the human position, which it has done throughout the play: it exalts Samson — the human agent of the divine will. Moreover, though, the Chorus helps to abort the tragic sequence of Samson's death by offering a glimpse of the cosmic significance of the event: "His uncontrollable intent." And, with the "All is best" conclusion, the sense of tragedy is essentially mitigated. Manoa, whose pain should act as a controlling measure of our own (compare, for example, Lear at Cordelia's death), is entirely acquiescent in the face of necessity and death. Upon hearing of his son's death, Manoa vents some mild lamentations (1570-77, note the brevity of the plaint) and then reins in his grief (1578). It is a fit image for the conclusion to this drama: grief is never allowed to gallop, perhaps not even to canter. The perspective at the end of the play is too cosmic to arouse any tragic feelings.

VI

The tragedy is mitigated by its Christian vision. In its perspective, Samson Agonistes goes beyond the confines of tragedy. Perhaps, as David Daiches suggests, "we lack a name for the kind of play which it is."[22] Tragedy achieves its cathartic conclusion through a representation of the glory that is man; through the striving of the

hero, a striving that almost exceeds his mortal coil, we see the best that man can be; we see a soul too great to be contained in the mediocre world, a pride too fierce to be confined, a spirit that almost bursts with a conflicting will to live and to die. Samson tries to affect those passions, but his is a limited glory. All his actions — those he undertakes without God's approbation — are calamitously wrong. As a tragic hero, Samson is a poor example of humanity rising above its limitations. And, as tragedy, Samson Agonistes is as poor an example as its hero. To compare it with the high-water marks of tragic art, Hellenic and Shakespearean, the auditor of Samson Agonistes, we speculate (and with the concept of catharsis, one must speculate), does not achieve catharsis. There are critics who do profess that they achieve a purgation at the completion of the tragedy and, of course, we cannot disprove their claims.[23] Such is the right of each auditor of a genre which from its initial commentator has been distinguished by its emotive achievement. We have, however, offered our premise of what tragic art aspires to, what the basis of catharsis is, and why this particular drama fails to meet the former and to achieve the latter.

Thus far, then, we have disclaimed Samson Agonistes as tragedy on the basis of the failure of the hero to meet the standards of tragic heroism. Having established our premises, then, that a hero who acts solely as an agent of God cannot be a tragic hero, that a tragedy without a tragic hero cannot rightly be called a tragedy, that a tragedy involves a earth-bound perspective and the heavenly perspective of the cosmic significance of each tragic episode mitigates the tragedy, we must conclude that Samson Agonistes is not a success as a tragedy. Its vision of heroism, with its theocentric origin, remains consistent in

the Miltonic canon, and because of that heroic code its tragic effect is mute. The heroism which Milton espoused is fit for epic conventions, but seems too austere for a genre which is based on the emotive appeal of human suffering and human glory. If one does feel "calm of mind, all passion spent" at the conclusion of Samson Agonistes (nor do we claim that the pithy phrase is unfit as a description of the auditor's passion), it is a feeling which is better described, we believe, as acquiescence, not catharsis.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

> Pardon me, Mighty Poet, nor despise
> My causeless, yet not impious, surmise.[1]

In his fourth lecture On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History, Carlyle writes of the heroic soul:

> There needs not a great soul to make a hero; there needs a god-created soul which will be true to its origin; that will be a great soul![2]

Milton's conception of heroism is not vastly different from this point of view. The heroes of the Miltonic canon are those who remain true to their divine origin: the Son, Adam before his fall, and Samson despite himself. The greatness is not of the soul, but of the ability of the soul to retain its faithfulness to God. Submission is the predominant note in the heroic code of the Miltonic hero; a spiritual strength derived from humiliation before one's Creator. Carnal strength, like any other independent source of worldly force, is of no import to the spiritual hero. The means of undercutting Samson's worldly strength in relation to his divinely-inspired strength is clearly a message that is constant in Milton's renunciation of a code of carnal reliance: "thy slaughter'd foes in number more / Than all thy life had slain before." The most important element in the Miltonic heroic code is its theocentricity. God is the premise and the conclusion. This code is constant through all of Milton's works; the only variation is in the subtlety with which he presents it.

NOTES

Notes for Chapter One

[1] Hesiod, Works and Days, Hesiod, Trans. Richmond Lattimore (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977). Hereafter cited in the text as WD. ll. 157-61.

[2] The Iliad. Hereafter cited in the text using Arabic numerals to signify the book number of the poem. For the Odyssey Roman numerals will be used to signify the book number of that poem. Translations primarily used are noted in the "Preface."

[3] Cedric H. Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1965) p.213. Also Seth L. Schein, The Mortal Hero: An Introduction to Homer's Iliad (Berkeley: University of California, 1984) p. 79.

[4] Michael Grant, Myths of the Greeks and Romans (New York: New American Library, 1962) p. 47.

[5] Cf. Jasper Griffin, Homer on Life and Death (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) p. 93. Grant, p.48. Emily Vermeule, Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) p. 94, 97.

[6] Vermeule p. 97, quoting S.E. Bassett, The Poetry of Homer.

[7] Schein, 68. Professor Vermeule sums up the Iliad's view of mortality with an interesting distinction. She writes,

> In a way it is wrong to regard the Iliad as a poem of death, even in some partial aspect, although death is so powerful a theme. It might be truer to regard it as a poem of mortality and mortal accidents, and of the kinds of behavior only mortals need have to confront these.

[8] Vermeule, 112, 116.

[9] Bruno Snell, The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955) p. 18-19. Commentary on the role of consciousness in Homer has taken Professor Snell's remarks as its starting point, either to agree or to dispute. These commentators include M.I. Finley, The World of Odysseus (London: Chatto & Windus, 1977) p. 25; Erich Auerbach, "Odysseus' Scar" in Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953) p. 13; Hazel E. Barnes, The Meddling Gods: Four Essays on Classical Themes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974) p. 116-17; James M. Redfield, Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975) pp. 102, 108.

[10] Hamlet IV iv, 37. Cf Iliad 3.109-10: "when an elder man is among them, he looks behind him and in front. . ."

[11] The word "psychomachy" is listed as obsolete in the OED. Its meaning, "conflict of the soul" is usually expressed in the Latin original psychomachia.

[12] In the Fitzgerald translation the same meaning is conveyed: "Athena will never let me tremble."

[13] The Greek verb is esakousa, meaning either to give heed to or to hearken. Fitzgerald's translation carries wholly different connotations: Cf. W.B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968) p. 72.

> Odysseus did not hear him, as he ran
> far wide of him and seaward towards the ships.

[14] The debate on free-will or determinism in Homer is as exhaustive as the debate would be in most instances, literary or otherwise. In trying to deal with the issue in Homer's epics one can find oneself as Milton's fallen angels:

> In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
> Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate,
> Fixt Fate, Free will, Foreknowledge absolute,
> And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost. (PL 1.558-61)

The debate is carried on by various critics, but as the choices are limited (i.e. either the hero has free will or he does not), we can mention the basic critical works on the subject. Professor Hazel E. Barnes suggests that the gods bestow favours only on those who deserve it; that the god's protection is itself a mark of honour and recognition of achievement (104). Barnes sums up her argument thus: "Homeric man tended to explain inexplicable happenings by invoking divine intervention, but this does not seem to have made him feel that he was thereby rendered powerless. One of the touching things in the Iliad is the number of occasions when a hero declares, 'Well, since the gods appear to be no longer on our side, we must fight all the harder'."(123) Professor Grube ["The Gods of Homer," The Phoenix V (1951): 62-78] suggests a moderate solution: "The gods give of good and evil to the good and evil at their own sweet will; man must endure whatever they send. This does not mean, however, that man is merely the plaything of the gods, without freedom of action or responsibility for his own life"(70). Professor Schein argues for the treatment of the god as a symbol: "Because Homer tells us, in any given instance, that Athene or another god has made something happen, we tend to make the god the cause or agent. But in fact the achievement or excellence shown by a hero, or any unusual or striking occurence, indicates retrospectively both to the poet and to his audience that a god has been present; actually the god is an ex post facto explanation,, not a cause or agent of what

happened"(57). One of many incidents in the Iliad which precludes Schein's thesis is the incident of Patroclus' death (16.785 ff), which we discuss on pages 12-13. There does seem to be recognizable, and recognized, divine intervention in this instance; and it is only one of many. Our reading of Homer is more in agreement with Professor Finley's assessment of the phenomenon of divine intervention: "Modern critics who call Homer's gods 'symbolic predicates,' the activity on Olympus the poet's 'scenario,' not only inject modern theology and modern science into the world of Odysseus, they destroy the poems. The narrative itself collapses without the intervention of the gods, and so do the psychology and the behavior of the heroes"(131).

15 Cf. Hippolochos to Glaukos: "to be always among the bravest, and hold my head above others"(6.208).

16 Whitman, 193

17 At least four critics make an argument for Achilles as a test of the heroic code. Whitman, 213; Redfield, 107; Schein, 71; and C.M. Bowra, Tradition and Design in the Iliad (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930) p. 248. My argument is somewhat less interested in Achilles' pragmatic role, although the case the critics do make fits in nicely with the explication I propose for the Odyssey.

18 Alfred Lord Tennyson, "Ulysses" ll. 18-21.

19 Jasper Griffin, Homer (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1980) p. 49-50.

20 Penelope's epithets are more variegated in Fitzgerald's translation than in Lattimore's. i.328, iv.808, iv.830.

21 Whitman, 287-92.

22 Barnes, 103.

23 Tennyson, "Ulysses" ll. 24-32.

24 Robert Graves, "Ulysses" ll. 16, 11-15. The initial "They" in the quotation is a culmination of sensual desire. Poem taken from Robert Graves, Collected Poems 1959, (London: Casell, 1959), p.87.

25 Stanford, 77-78.

26 Richmond Lattimore translates v.437 as "forethought."

27 The question of the authorship of the Iliad and the Odyssey, as interesting as it is, is beyond the pale of our study. Some brief but enlightening comments are made by Whitman, who argues that the author of both epics is the same, 286-87.

28 Edmund Spenser, "To the right honourable the Earle of Northumberland," Spenser: Poetical Works, Ed. J.C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) p. 411.

29 Horace, "Ode iv.9," The Complete Odes andd Epodes, Trans. W.G. Shepherd (Middlesex: Penguin, 1983).

Notes for Chapter Two

1 Alfred Lord Tennyson, "To Virgil," ll. 21-24.

2 Brooks Otis, "Introduction," Vergil: The Aeneid, 2nd edition, trans. Frank O. Copley (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975) p. xxiii.

3 Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews, Ed. Martin C. Battestin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961) p.74. bk. II ch, 1.

4 Viktor Poschl, The Art of Vergil: Image and Symbol in the **Aeneid**, trans. Gerda Seligson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962) p. 24-33; Brooks Otis, Vergil: A Study in Civilized Poetry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) p. 223.

5 William James, quoted in Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World: Lowell Lectures 1925 (New York: Macmillan, 1925) p. 10.

6 Poschl 92; C.M. Bowra, From Virgil to Milton (London: Macmillan & Co., 1945) p. 35.

7 Bowra, 35; Charles Rowan Beye, The **Iliad**, the **Odyssey**, and the Epic Tradition (London: Macmillan, 1968) p. 207; C.S. Lewis, A Preface to **Paradise Lost**, (London: Oxford University Press, 1942) p. 34. One of Virgil's supreme achievements — "one of the most important revolutions in the history of poetry" — is, as Professor Lewis writes, his ability "to take one single national legend and treat it in such a way that we feel the vaster theme to be somewhat implicit in it."

8 Othello I iii ll. 158-66.

9 Culpa occurs at 2.140, 4.19, 4.172, and 12.648.

10 Bowra, 54.

11 Bowra, 51; Beye, 230; Reuben Brower, Hero and Saint: Shakespeare and the Graeco-Roman Heroic Tradition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) p. 99.

12 Quintius Horatius Flaccus, Horace: The Complete Odes and Epodes, trans. W.G. Shepherd (Middlesex: Penguin, 1983) bk. I ode 37 ll. 25-32.

13 Poschl, 115; Otis, 348; Bowra, 49.

[14] Professor Poschl argues that Turnus is more Achillean than Hector-like; Professor Otis argues the contrasting point of view; Poschl, 115; Otis, 348. My argument is somewhat different from that of either.

[15] T.S. Eliot, "Virgil and the Christian World," On Poetry and Poets (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1957) p. 143.

[16] Theodore Haecker, "Odysseus and Aeneas," Virgil, Father of the West, reprinted in Virgil: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Steele Commager (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966) p. 70.

[17] Eliot, 142-43; Bowra, 57; Otis, 280.

[18] Brower, 86.

[19] Critics differ as to Aeneas' "maturation". Brower argues that his "trials do not change him fundamentally — he is pius Aeneas at the start as at the end," with the progress of the poem only adding to Aeneas' surety of his mission (98). Bowra suggests that Aeneas develops into a "complete" hero by book 5 (59). Otis writes that Aeneas achieves his psychological development by the end of the sixth book, the Odyssean portion of the Aenead, and demonstrates this development in the second half of the poem, the Iliadic portion of the Aenead (223). My essay does not attempt to locate the exact point of development. I do agree with Otis, however, on his argument that the tenth book shows a somewhat too ferocious Aeneas, with too strong an Achillean flavour.

[20] Eliot, 143.

[21] Merritt Y. Hughes, "The Christ of Paradise Regained and the Renaissance Heroic Tradition," Studies in Philology 35 (1938): 265 ff.

[22] Otis, 223.

Notes for Chapter Three

[1] John Dryden, "Under the Portrait of John Milton," ll. 1-4.

[2] Peter Hagin, The Epic Hero and the Decline of Heroic Poetry (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1964) p. 148; E.M.W. Tillyard, Milton, revised ed. (New York: Collier, 1966) p.246; Northrop Frye, The Return of Eden: Five Essays on Milton's Epics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) p. 28.

[3] Thomas Mann, "Death in Venice," Death in Venice and Seven Other Stories, trans. H.T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Random, 1954) p. 11.

[4] John Milton, Areopagitica, John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, Ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis: Odyssey, 1957) p. 728. All future references to Areopagitica will be taken from this edition.

5 Milton, Areopagitica, p. 728.

6 Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, Spenser: Poetical Works, Ed. J.C. Smith and E. deSelincourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) Bk. 1 canto 10 ll. 1-9.

7 Hagin, 148.

8 Tillyard, 236. Other discussions of Satan as hero, or having heroic potential, are too numerous to list. One interesting statement, because of its wit and its relevance to our concern with Milton's treatment of classical heroic codes, is that of Professor Steadman: "Milton's devils are Homer's warriors writ large" [Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959) p. 201]. Francis C. Blessington, **Paradise Lost** and the Classical Epic (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) pp. 1-18, gives an astute reading of how Milton's Satan is degraded by comparison to Odysseus and Achilles; that, indeed, Satan is a parody of classical heroism because he cannot measure up to the classical standards.

9 Samuel Johnson, "Life of Milton," Lives of the English Poets: A Selection, Ed. John Wain (New York: Everyman's, 1975) p. 96.

10 Joseph Addison, Criticism on Milton's **Paradise Lost**, Ed. Edward Arber (Westminister: A. Constable and Co., 1895) p. 28.

11 Addison, 18.

12 Percy Bysshe Shelley, "On the Devil, and Devils," The Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley in Verse and Prose vol. vi, Ed. Harry Buxton Forman (London: Reeves and Turner, 1880) p. 388-89.

13 John Dryden, "Dedication of the Aeneis," Essays of John Dryden vol. II, Ed. W.P. Ker (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961) p. 165.

14 As mentioned in note #8, the Satan debate exceeds listing in the footnotes. Some primary discussions are offered by Stella Purce Revard, The War in Heaven: **Paradise Lost** and the Tradition of Satan's Rebellion (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980) p. 220, 234; John T. Shawcross, With Mortal Voice: The Creation of **Paradise Lost** (University Press of Kentucky, 1982) p. 33, 35; Tillyard, 235, 236; Frye, 23.

15 Frye, 21.

16 The discussions of Satan as anti-hero are listed in note #14. Others include M.V Rama Sarma, The Heroic Argument: A Study of Milton's Heroic Poetry (Madras: Macmillan, 1971) p. 81-90; Stanley E. Fish, Surprised By Sin: The Reader in **Paradise Lost** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) p. 173.

17 Kingsley Widmer, "The Iconography of Renunciation: The Miltonic Simile," Journal of English Literary History 25 (1958), reprinted in Milton's Epic Poetry, Ed. C.A. Patrides (Middlesex: Penguin, 1967) p.

131. As we mentioned in note #8, Blessington raises some objections to a reading of Satan as Homeric hero degraded.

18 John Milton, "The Passion," Hughes ed. p. 62. ll. 13-14.

19 Frye, chapter two: "The Breaking of the Music," pp. 32-59, esp. 49.

20 One may compare Rembrandt's "The Blinding of Samson" (1636) with its overhanging darkness descending on the lower foreground as Samson's universe is slowly descending into darkness. Also comparable is "Danae," in which the myth of Danae's being impregnated by the golden shower of Zeus is accomplished despite Danae's father who locks her in a room under the tutelage of an angel. The angel's wings in the painting become enmeshed in the bedposts and his hands are handcuffed, implying the necessity and inexorability of fate. The background, once again, is indicative of the foreground action in which Danae welcomes the golden shower.

21 Joseph H. Summers, The Muse's Method: An Introduction to **Paradise Lost** (New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1981) p. 193. Professor Summers argues that during the visions of books ten and eleven, the knowledge of human life is extended, and Adam's partial conclusions are corrected. By book twelve, Adam uses "henceforth" correctly in his speech accepting the heroic code of the Son(12.561 ff).

22 A.J.A. Waldock, **Paradise Lost** and its Critics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966) p.41. For an opposing reading of the Fall see Summers' sixth chapter, "The Ways of the Fall," pp. 147-75.

23 John Milton, De Doctrina Christiana, The Works of John Milton vol. 15, Ed. Frank Allen Patterson et. al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933). Hereafter referred to as Works.

24 Waldock, 54.

25 Addison, 44-45.

26 The critics who bring the reader into prominent view in their criticism include Frye, 32; Summers, 30, 154; Fish, 158-207; Shawcross, 41.

27 Johnson, 95. Dr. Johnson says: ". . .this poem has, by the nature of its subject, the advantage above all others, that it is universally and perpetually interesting. All mankind will, through all ages, bear the same relation to Adam and to Eve, and must partake of that good and evil which extend to themselves."

28 M.A. Di Cesare, "'Not Less But More Heroic': The Epic Task and the Renaissance Hero," Yearbook of English Studies 12 (1982): 68.

29 Hagin, 168.

30 Shawcross, 41; acknowledgment to Hagin, p. 181 n.#5.

Notes for Chapter Four

1 John Milton, The Reason of Church-government urg'd against Prelaty, The Works of John Milton vol. III pt. 1, Ed. Frank Allen Patterson et. al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 237. All quotations from Milton's prose works, unless otherwise noted, will be taken from this edition, hereafter referred to as Works.

2 Thomas Newton's edition of Paradise Regained (London, 1752) pp. 186-88. Quoted in H. T. Swedenberg, The Theory of the Epic in England 1650-1800, (New York: Russell & Russell), p. 136 n.12. For discussion of the brief epic genre see Barbara K. Lewalski, Milton's Brief Epic: The Genre, Meaning, and Art of Paradise Regained, (Providence: Brown University Press, 1966).

3 John Milton, The Reason of Church-government urg'd against Prelaty, Works vol III pt. 1 p. 237.

4 Ibid.

5 Herbert Grierson, Cross Currents in English Literature of the Seventeenth Century, (Middlesex: Penguin, 1966), p.253. This is a criticism quite common in works dealing with Paradise Regained. As a pure speculation, we offer an interesting phenomenon, linking biological age with appreciation for the poem. Professor Douglas Bush, when he first approached PR in 1939, wrote,

> In PR . . .Milton is consciously trying to show Christ's human humility and constancy of faith; yet his hero is perfect and cannot sin, and the poem, as the presentation of a moral struggle and victory, is relatively unreal and cold. [Bush, The Renaissance and English Humanism p.120]

In 1964, after some twenty-five years of studying Milton and, dare we presume, some "moral struggle" — not necessarily offered as premise and conclusion — Professor Bush changed his mind drastically. He writes:

> It is not Milton's fault if we do not share his moral passion, and the poem is cold only to the cold.[Bush, Milton, p.184]

The brief epic ,be it Job or PR, seems to be the genre of a more mature audience. So, that same editor Thomas Newton writes that the moral reflections of PR are more "natural to that season of life, and better suited Milton's age and infirmities than gay florid descriptions."[Swedenborg, p.136] Whether this fact be true or no is without our study. We may only affirm that though time hath stolen on his wing our three and twentieth year (and one more), the poem strikes us as a sublime expression in no way cold, in no way unreal.

6 A.E. Dyson offers the most inimical attack on Paradise Regained. He maintains that Christ cannot be a hero. The reasons he offers strike us as somewhat of a semantic quibble. He writes:

> For the specific heroic glory cannot belong to omnipotence: other types of glory, perhaps, but not that appropriate to two great human beings equally matched. If the victory is inevitable, then the conflict is to some extent faked, and the heroic glory unearned. If the glory is earned, then the theology is undermined, and the whole myth collapses.
>
> What this amounts to saying, perhaps, is that the Christian tradition can accept Christ's triumph as being real, as well as inevitable, only as long as it is thought of as the victory of love over hate, suffering over violence, good over evil. The moment you think of it as an heroic encounter, the reality and the inevitability are incompatible. An individual Christian, maybe, might engage heroically with Satan; but not Christ himself, even if the most Arian interpretation of his nature is allowed. ["The Meaning of Paradise Regained," TSLL 3 (1961): 199-200]

Professor Dyson seems to forget that Milton's view of the situation is that it is "above heroic." Indeed, Milton's whole intent is to assert a new heroism, one which, as we show, is reliant on acknowledgment of its theocentricity. Regarding Christ's omnipotence, see footnote # 9 for a list of references to Christ's manhood. Professor Dyson also supports the argument that Milton's Christ is "rude." Indeed, he goes so far as to ask that "if you reversed their positions [Christ's and Satan's], would not both be still basically the same?"(209).

Professor Richard Jordan does not in any way maintain the ideas which Dyson suggests; he does suggest, though, that Christ is incapable of falling and he retains his Godhead during the temptation ["Paradise Regained and the Second Adam," Milton Studies 9 (1976): 263].

7 John Milton, De Doctrina Christiana in Works vol. XV p. 273.

8 Ibid, p. 277.

9 The proof of Christ's manhood seems assured by the invocation, with its parallel statements "one man's . . .one man's." Further references are I.91, I.122, I.140, I.150, I.166, II.135, IV.598-99.

10 Cf. Douglas Bush, Prefaces to Renaissance Literature, p. 99; Tillyard, p. 263.

11 Douglas Bush, The Renaissance and English Humanism, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1939), p. 125.

12 Adverbial clauses in Paradise Regained are almost always significant. Cf. I.406, I.493, II.378, II.432, III.43, III.121, III.386, IV.109, IV.170, IV.285.

13 Satan's mention of "best," "highest," and other superlatives is significant of his understanding of heroism. Cf. I.69, II.208, II.410-12, II.418, II.426, III.30, III.177, III.224-26, III.238-39, III.250, IV.106, IV.553.

14 Burton O. Kurth, Milton and Christian Heroism, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 120

15 John Milton, Areopagitica, from John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, Ed. Merritt Y. Hughes, (Indianapolis: Odyssey Press, 1957) p. 728.

16 Ibid.

17 Kingsley Widmer, "The Iconography of Renunciation: The Miltonic Simile," Journal of English Literary History 25 (1958). Reprinted in Milton's Epic Poetry, Ed. C.A. Patrides, (Middlesex: Penguin, 1967), p. 122. Professor Widmer makes some acute observations regarding this simile in particular, concluding that this "belittling of a traditional heroic comparison accords with the Miltonic insistence on the incommensurability of the Christian and classical."

Notes for Chapter Five

1 The debate regarding the time of Samson Agonistes' composition has offered choices ranging from 1640–1670. It is not germane to this study to offer any certain date for the play's composition; it is enough that we argue that the play is not the work of a young eager poet with a respect for physical prowess, nor an older poet who has regained an interest in poetry of active combative heroism.

2 E.M.W. Tillyard, Milton (New York: Collier, 1966) 278, 280, 281.

3 John M. Steadman, Milton and the Renaissance Hero (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967) 188.

4 William G. Madsen, "From Shadowy Types to Truth," The Lyric and Dramatic Milton, Ed. Joseph H. Summers (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).

5 Madsen, 109–10, 114.

6 John T. Shawcross, "Irony as Tragic Effect: Samson Agonistes and the Tragedy of Hope," Calm of Mind: Tercentenary Essays on **Paradise Regained** and **Samson Agonistes** in Honor of John S. Diekhoff, Ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1971) p. 289.

7 Don Cameron Allen, The Harmonious Vision: Studies in Milton's Poetry (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1954). Allen undertakes a thorough examination of despair in Milton's major poetry in the fourth chapter: "The Idea as Pattern: Despair and Samson Agonistes," pp.71–94.

8 Boethius, Consolation of Philosophy, Trans. V.E. Watts (Middlesex: Penguin, 1969). Boethius articulates the view that tragedy is a mental process of remembering the former state of happiness when one is fallen into a state of misfortune: "In all adversity of fortune, the most

wretched kind is once to have been happy"(p.61). This view is echoed by Dante. As Francesca turns to Dante, she says tearfully:

> . . .The bitterest of woes
> Is to remember in our wretchedness
> Old happy times. (Inferno V.121-23)

Chaucer also articulates this view of tragic memory in Troilus and Criseye:

> For of fortunes sharpe adversitee
> The worst kynde of infortune is this,
> A man to han ben in prosperitee,
> And it rememberen, whan it passed is. (III.1625-28)

It will also be recalled that Satan suffers from the same sort of tragic memory in the fourth book of Paradise Lost:

> . . .Now conscience wakes despair
> That slumber'd, wakes the bitter memory
> Of what he was, what is, and what must be. . . (4.22-25)

9 The bi-fold virtues of wisdom and strength are discussed at length by A.B. Chambers, "Wisdom and Fortitude in Samson Agonistes," PMLA 78 (1963): 315-20 and William O. Harris, "Despair and 'Patience and the Truest Fortitude' in Samson Agonistes," ELH 30 (1963): 107-20 and John M. Steadman, Milton and the Renaissance Hero, 154. Our discussion differs in its approach from these accounts.

10 Allen, pp. 81-82.

11 Irene Samuel, "Samson Agonistes as Tragedy," Calm of Mind: Tercentenary Essays on **Paradise Regained** and **Samson Agonistes** in Honor of John S. Diekhoff, Ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1971) p. 248.

12 Allen, 93. In a footnote on page 188 of Milton and the Renaissance Hero, Professor Steadman lists the various studies of Samson Agonistes as a drama of regeneration.

13 Samson himself admits to three formal challenges, but all told he distinctly challenges Harapha nine times: 1091, 1105, 116-29, 1139-55, 1175, 1222, 1230, 1235, 1237-41.

14 Madsen, 104.

15 Samuel Johnson, "Milton," Lives of the English Poets: A Selection (New York: Everyman's Library, 1975) p. 103

16 For a discussion of martyrdom and its role in Miltonic heroism see my earlier chapters, especially on Paradise Lost. Milton, in his Of Reformation, refers to "the Heavenly Fortitude of Martyrdome." Works vol. three pt 1, p. 11.

17 On the distinction between the Hebraic spirit of the poet and the Hellenic spirit necessary to tragedy see M.V. Sarma, The Heroic Argument: A Study of Milton's Heroic Poetry (Madras: Macmillan, 1971) p. 128; Sir R.C. Jebb, "Samson Agonistes and the Hellenic Drama,"

Proceedings of the British Academy 3 (1907-08): 343; David Daiches, Milton (New York: Norton, 1966) p. 247.

18 In the "Preface" to Samson Agonistes, Milton calls Revelation a tragedy, as he similarily does in the The Reason of Church Government Urged Against Prelaty, Works vol. 3 pt. 1, p.238. In both cases, the generic distinction is based on the structuring of the choral interludes.

19 Laurence Michel, "The Possibility of Christian Tragedy," Tragedy: Modern Essays in Criticism (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963) gives the most rigid statement regarding Christian tragedy: "Christianity is intransigent to tragedy; tragedy bucks and balks under Christianity"(232). Michel, however, classifies "Christian tragedy" as being either a> written since the beginning of the Christian era, or b> "tragedy about Christianity." We suggest that Christian tragedy may take as its subject pre-Christian figures: Troilus and Samson are two that come to mind. Michel, because of his narrow classification-scheme, argues that Samson Agonistes is "spasmodically tragic, anything but Christian"(229). We argue, on the other hand, that the perspective is what demonstrates the art's theological bias. Milton, because of his belief in election, did declare that some Old Testament figures would be saved by faith in God alone. (De Doctrina Christiana, Works vol. 15, p. 405-07).

Raymond B. Waddington, "Melancholy Against Melancholy: Samson Agonistes as Renaissance Tragedy," Calm of Mind: Tercentenary Essays on **Paradise Regained** and **Samson Agonistes** in Honor of John S. Diekhoff, Ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1971) p. 282, argues that Milton accepted a Parcelesian homeopathic formula of catharsis, which presupposes a "sympathetic correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm," and finally culminates in a Christian catharsis: "Christ heals us all." Our discussion of the difference between catharsis, as Aristotle and sequent commentators have defined and redefined it, and acquiescence, we leave to our conclusion.

20 Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Man," The Poems of Alexander Pope, Ed. John Butt (London: Metheun & Co., 1963) Epistle II, ll.289-94.

21 Geoffrey Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde IV.1812-13. Chaucer's conception of tragedy can best be seen in light of the concluding lines of his poem:

> Go, litel bok, go, litel myn tragedye,
> Ther God thi makere yet, er that he dye,
> So sende myght to make in som comedye! (IV.1786-88)

22 Daiches, 248.

23 Professor A.S.P. Woodhouse, "Tragic Effect in Samson Agonistes," UTQ 28 (1959), argues that there is a cathartic release in the reading of the play:

> The reconciliation, the mitigating of the sense of disaster, is worked out in purely human terms before the larger rhythm of the

> divine comedy is invoked, lest that rhythm should not only resolve the tragic irony of the action, but dissolve the whole tragic effect. (222)

Such a mitigation, we believe, happens before any sense of the human pathos is felt; Manoa's response to the news of his son's death is only seven lines, and they even have a sense of relief to them: "death who sets all free / Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge"(1572-73). Professor Woodhouse is forced to qualify many of the concessions one usually gives to tragedy in order to classify Milton's drama as such. Essentially, though, Milton's poetic vision was too saturated in the *felix culpa* tradition to allow him to write a satisfying tragedy. And only tragedy can effect catharsis. Such a trite comment might seem unnecessary, but with each genre now being given a "type" of cathartic outlet, one must keep one's terms clear.

Notes for Chapter Six

1 Andrew Marvell, "On Mr. Milton's *Paradise Lost*," ll. 23-24.

2 Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, Ed. Archibald MacMechan (Boston: Athenaeum Press, 1901) p. 167.

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